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CONTENTS

COMMENT 2

A Revaluation ..... *Bernard De Voto* 7

Foreigners In Mexico ..... *Witter Bynner* 11

Traveling Salesman To His Mistress ..... *Kenneth O. Hansen* 12

Communique From San Francisco ..... *Alan Swallow* 13

Mr. Graham Takes A Bath ..... *Vardis Fisher* 14

Four Rocky Mountain Novels ..... *Ray B. West, Jr.* 21

Two Poems ..... *Brewster Ghiselin* 29

The Vision Of God ..... *Ellis Foote* 30

Postlude ..... *Charlie Masters* 31

Balance His, Swing Yours ..... *Wallace Stegner* 32

Smoke On The Snow ..... *George Snell* 39

Prothalamion ..... *Robert Price* 48

CITIES OF THE ROCKIES: 2
Santa Fe ..... *Alfred Morang* 51

BOOKS
The Conversion of Joseph Wood Krutch ..... *Austin Warren* 55
Fisherian Anthropology ..... *Jack Conroy* 57
Two Western Books ..... *Dale L. Morgan* 58
Farrell As Critic ..... *Jarvis Thurston* 60
Rilke's Letters ..... *M. L. Nielsen* 62

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Comment

THIS issue of **Rocky Mountain Review** celebrates the achievement of ten years of continuous publication by this magazine — a not inconsiderable age when measured by the standards of other regional magazines, particularly magazines which, like RMR, have attempted publication without the support or subsidization of some institution or organized group. It is, so far as we know, the oldest unsubidized little magazine now publishing.

By calling attention to this fact, however, we do so not with the intention of soliciting sympathy or good wishes, but rather to acknowledge the generosity and patience of a host of contributors(many of them well-known and well-rewarded elsewhere) who have written **without pay** for this magazine over a period which, in this case, is longer than we wish it might have been. It has been the hopes of the editors for a long time that such a condition might be remedied, but our hopes have been tempered by the knowledge that the most common cause of failure among the smaller magazines has been a too-ambitious program of expansion.

We feel, however, that the present issue is a fitting place to remark that the next project to be undertaken by us is the gathering of a fund through which it will be possible to pay contributors at least a nominal fee. We are not basing our plans upon the expectation of private donations (which we have never asked) but are, rather, inviting our friends (who are, of course, our readers) to share this project with us by presenting their acquaintances with gift subscriptions, the proceeds of which will be applied **solely** to the accumulation of a contributors' fund.

With the Christmas season approaching, it is hoped that as many readers as possible will take advantage of this means both of presenting their friends with a year-long remembrance and of hastening the day when the editors will have one less reason for apologizing for the shortcomings of RMR. For your convenience, a coupon has been inserted on page 63 which we hope you will fill out and send in as soon as possible.

(Continued on Page 62)

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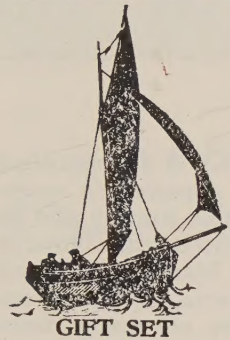

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A Revaluation*

By BERNARD DEVOTO

MANY YEARS have passed since I would have attempted any justification whatever of my early two articles on Utah. They were ignorant, brash, prejudiced, malicious, and, what is worst of all, irresponsible. They were absolutely in the *Mercury* mood of illegitimate and dishonest attack. They represented the only occasions in my career when I yielded to that mood. I have spent practically all my literary life attacking other manifestations of that mood, and I have always regarded my yielding to it on those occasions as an offense which can be neither justified nor palliated.

There was, and doubtless remains, much in the life and culture of Utah that could be legitimately criticized. Some of the things I said in those articles made points which would have been legitimate criticism if I had said them fairly and objectively—and if the entire mood and atmosphere of the articles had not been atrociously offensive. It was, and doubtless remains, thoroughly possible to oppose some of the tendencies and manifestations of civilization in Utah on reasonable, empirical grounds. But that consideration is irrelevant, since my criticism and opposition were embodied in a lot of prejudice, irresponsible humor, and a general yanking out of shirt-tails and setting them on fire.

I cannot now remember whether I realized as much when I was writing. Certainly I realized it soon afterward. I believe that everything I have written about Utah and the Mormon Church ever since has been fair-minded and objective. I go farther than that: I think that everything I have written about them since those articles has been informed by a basic sympathy. But again, that does not matter . . . except that very little I have since written about them has been taken into account by the people who go on denouncing me.

---

*This essay was originally a private communication between Mr. DeVoto and a resident of Utah. Mr. DeVoto wishes this made clear because "I dislike talking about myself with such seriousness."

Why did I write them, and write them as I did? Well, for one thing, I was a young buck, intoxicated with the newly achieved privilege of publication, full of wild and yeasty irreverence, and obviously gifted at burlesque and extravaganza. (That last, I may say parenthetically, is an embarrassing, occasionally dangerous gift. It has recurrently thrown me throughout my career and even now sometimes prods me into writing passages which react against the serious intention of my work. We have been told that a sense of humor is fatal to a career in politics. It is a handicap to any career in literature and an extremely serious handicap to a career in social criticism. It has joined with a habit of using concrete words to keep my stature in contemporary letters considerably smaller than it probably would have been if I had expressed myself solemnly and abstractly. In beautiful letters, the light touch is dangerous.) For another thing, I was, if a cocky young fool, also an oversensitive young fool—and I had, or thought I had, been widely snooted and derided in Utah for presuming to desire a career as a writer. Ogden, Utah, generally, is a far more sophisticated, far more cultivated society now than it was when I was growing up there. In my adolescence I was certainly the only person in the State, male or female, who aspired to such a career. The fact that such an ambition is now fairly common there and is treated as a matter of course is a sign, not that I was wrong and the attitude toward me right, but that the local culture has progressed in thirty-odd years. At any rate, I was widely treated as a fool on the one hand, for it must be foolish of me to suppose that I could ever be a writer, and as a kind of pansy on the other hand, for obviously only the epicene would aspire to a career so obviously trivial and even sissy as that of a writer. I was, I repeat, widely snooted and derided on just those grounds. Now unquestionably I exaggerated this, but unquestionably it also existed. The attitude was not, at that time, confined to Utah; it was characteristic of provincial America everywhere, although I think it was more evident in Utah than in most places, for Utah was nearer than most places to the pioneer society in which literary activity has always been considered foolish and sissy. I resented it violently—much more than I should have resented it if I had been older, wiser, more cultivated myself, or more sophisticated. So I reacted against it when I came to write those articles. In some degree they were acts of self-vindication, in some degree acts of revenge.

Later on, I deeply regretted having written them. I do not regret them now. I conceive that the damage they did to Utah was nil—was wholly non-existent. (In all those years of the *Mercury's* slam-bang, indiscriminate derision of American life, was any attack on any community written that is now remembered in the community attacked, save only mine? I doubt it. An antiquarian, a historian of that period, I am familiar with most of those attacks and as I go about the country I inquire about them. I never find anyone except antiquarians and historians who remembers them. And most of those people do not remember them at first hand, but have encountered them in research.) They did Utah no harm

and they did me much good. For one thing they succeeded in rousing a historian's conscience in me, so that I have never again written anything without knowing what I was talking about. But what is much more important, they have enabled me to understand that period, the youth and young manhood of my own generation, as I should never have been able to understand it if I had not both written and repented them. They were absolutely and altogether of my literary generation. The revolt against the home town and the dishonest attack on it are type-specimens, absolute stigmata, of the period. My own career in letters has been in absolute opposition to the main literary current of my time. From my second novel on to *The Year of Decision* and *The Literary Fallacy,* I have set myself to oppose the ideas, concepts, theories, sentiments, and the superstitions of the official literature of the United States between the two wars. If I have any significance as a writer, it derives entirely from that fact. And that fact in turn rests, intellectually, on two realizations: my realization of what I had done in writing those articles and my realization of what Van Wyck Brooks had done in evolving and elaborating his system of thinking about American culture. I could not have understood my literary generation, and certainly could not have taken a stand in opposition to it, without either experience.

So much for my part. Let me add what I believe to be true about the reception of those articles in Utah and their subsequent reputation there.

We cannot imagine those articles being written today: the world has changed too much. Mutatis Mutandis, granting the idioms and sentiments of this later time, if the equivalent of those articles were to be published today, they would, I think, cause considerably less stir and offense in Utah. The State has grown more sophisticated. It has come to understand more what intellectual and literary discussion are, it has become at least a little more tolerant. More people are accustomed to the play and interchange and expression of ideas. Ideas are more likely to be received as ideas, not epithets, not insults, not imputations of dishonor. The booster state of mind, which in the West of the 1920's was the equivalent of the vigilante state of mind of earlier days, has lapsed considerably. If I or someone else were to say the same things today, in today's idioms, there would be a lot less fuss.

And yet it is true, I think, that Utah, and especially the Mormon culture, is extremely sensitive and intolerant to criticism and even to difference of opinion in which there is no criticism whatever. That is probably true of the West in general, as distinguished from other sections, even the South, but it is more true of Utah and the Mormons than the rest of the West. I have been, not surprised, but exceedingly interested, to see the old patterns repeated in the comments I got, in correspondence mostly, about *The Year of Decision.* There can be no questions whatever that that book contains the most sympathetic treatment of the Mormons ever published by a Gentile. Any dispassionate mind need only compare

it with, say, Linn or Werner. It is packed full of the most flagrant and even fulsome praise of the Mormons, condemnation of their oppressors, admiration of their achievements, sympathy with their suffering, patient exposition of their point of view. Yet I received a steady stream of vilification on the old, familiar grounds (you're a liar, you're a mobocrat, you're a homosexual, you're a publicity seeker, you're a cheap sensationalist, you're a defiler of the prophet and an author of filthy pornography, etc.), the Deseret Book Company holds up its order until it determines whether the book is sanitary or should be burnt by the public hangman (and how it finally made up its mind I haven't bothered to investigate), and somebody to me unknown sends my publisher a copy of a radio script which discusses the book purely in terms of those two old articles, as if there were nothing else in it. With one exception, nobody in the state reviews the book. Except for three or four people, and they friends of mine mostly, everyone who writes to me damns me for having blasphemed the religion of which, it is repeatedly pointed out, my mother was a communicant.

Now in the first place, I think it is true that most of these people who were so sore at me have not read the articles. They know my name as that son of a bitch who once wrote a lot of damned lies about Utah, and that relieves them of any obligation to know either what those damned lies were or what the later book is. But in the second place, it is lugubriously true that the orthodox Mormon mind cannot tolerate any objective treatment of Mormon history whatever. All treatment of the Mormons must completely accept the Mormon doctrinal, metaphysical and supernatural assumptions. If it does not accept them, then it is ipso facto prejudiced, unjust, and libelous. All Mormon actions have always been pure and sanitary, all criticism of them has always been evil and mendacious. Who is not for them is against them. That is why the fact that I have presented the Mormons to the readers of American history more sympathetically and with a more careful exposition of their relationships to their time than anyone has done before me goes without recognition in the abuse heaped on me. It is enough that I do not accept the Mormon assumptions. This is what I have sometimes called the Mormon inferiority complex. Something of the sort is, of course, a part of all religious orthodoxy. Yet it is perfectly possible for any writer to handle any other religion in America objectively and to be answered objectively in turn. It is not possible of the Mormons, and that is further evidence of their cultural lag.

All this makes no difference to me. I have no desire for Mormon praise and no need of Mormon approval. Neither do I desire the people of my home town to pay me any respect whatever. It certainly matters nothing to them that I have become a writer and, as one, have frequently written about the West. I should rather have them friendly toward me than otherwise, but I have become so thoroughly a part of a different society that I am fundamentally indifferent. I dislike it when I get a letter of fulsome praise from some Ogdenite who has seen my name in the

papers and is impressed by the publicity without giving a damn for the work and, most likely, without having read it. To the same degree, I dislike it when I get a letter full of equally ignorant abuse. I should like to know that there are a few people in Utah who like me, without reference to my work, and a few who like my work without reference to me. And I should like those who dislike my work to dislike it with reference to the work itself, not with reference to idiocies I committed long ago, which they may know, besides, only by hearsay.

When one is young and idiotic there may be some ambition to be known as a final authority, an important writer, a man of distinction and publicity or even fame. It doesn't last: one matures. One comes to understand that what counts is the honesty and thoroughness of the work. I should find it hard to state exactly what my ambition as a mature man is. It would run something like this: to do good work, to do work in which I may take some satisfaction and my friends some pleasure, at the utmost, as Frost once said of Robinson, to put something on the record that will not easily be dislodged.

FOREIGNERS IN MEXICO:

By WITTER BYNNER

A brace of foreigners just came by,
She whitened by paint, he darkened by sky,
She dead, he alive, they looked to my eye:
A sow in the market, a boar in the sty.

TRAVELING SALESMAN TO HIS MISTRESS

By KENNETH O. HANSEN

The sacred name of love, we must sell it to someone.
. . . Finnegan's Wake

1

About the wide sky night while
to circus music & the whirl
of dust black stallions wheel

on lacquer hoofs beneath whose sound
frenetic terse is ridden down
our reminiscent friend the paste faced clown

Down beacon haunted pathways strewn
with epileptic stars the free
bold stallions run

past that fried egg up easy moon
three gaited to calliope
have run night round to affirmation

2

high geared to swivel hip
taut flank & lip
rose carefully pained with thorn

our beauty through with jesting shouts
suggestive epithets at doubts

sin conscious raped in squalor
shrieking to the breath
of gin worn carpets & the red
hot screams of death
stale infamy! Our

beauty turns at last upon itself
& bright as birds eat crumbs
annihilates the land where day succumbs
in bric a brac of stars

then crazily about time's obscure vortices
aberrant categories waltz
& ecumenical
we ring thrice simple skies
with loud alarumed melodies

COMMUNIQUE FROM SAN FRANCISCO
June, 1945

By ALAN SWALLOW

Dear Sir:
Who is the one provoked
To poetry within our time?
The war has guns and words, and needs
The speaking guns; through war we climb
Like senators in politics—
Vague in the vast pantomine.
And those who wake up with the dead
Daily unlearn the old sublime.

How does one know a history
Of those who make it unaware?
Somewhere among them lies a hope
Which hangs its tired, ironical dare
In heads of all, and moves their blood.
Now on the San Francisco air
High fog covers the conference,
A history, and a slugging war.

Mr. Graham Takes a Bath

By VARDIS FISHER

BOB GRAHAM was a half-hour late when he left his office, and the first thing he did after locking the door behind him was to look quickly up and down the street. Sometimes his wife came over to town toward evening and a man had to be careful. You never could tell where she might show up unexpectedly and she was always suspicious—though if Mary Graham had been at the door when her husband emerged she would have found his suit immaculate and his thinning hair well-brushed under his soft Stetson. No odor of another woman clung to him. Before leaving his office Bob always carefully looked himself over because one of his friends had told him that a woman's hair or the smell of her cosmetics once in a while traveled home on an innocent man.

Bob was not an innocent man. His way of glancing sharply up and down the street showed that he felt anxious and guilty; but it must be said in fairness to him that he sometimes acted guilty when he was not. That also was a habit with him. He was not by nature a sly and intriguing fellow, and his affairs with women, which had been few indeed, bewildered more than they ravished his senses. By the time he reached his middle years he had come to live under a rather oppressive sense of guilt. That was Mary's fault. If he had not been under constant suspicion he would have lived his life as most extroverted and unreflective men prefer to, taking a chance woman who came his way with the same innocent gusto with which he took food or cigars. He would have been a good husband and father—and, in fact, he had been. He would never have fallen in love again or asked a divorce or done any of those mad and unpredictable things which neurotic men were always doing.

But Mary Graham, like the wives of so many small business men, was chronically unhappy. Also in middle age, she had grown large and stout, and if Bob had ever felt for her the careless rapture of romantic love, that time was far back in memory. Since they had been able to afford a maid, Mary had played bridge, joined book clubs, given literary teas, and in other ways tried to fill the emptiness and the idleness which are such a blight on American women of her kind.

Bob was willing for her to do those things. He remembered their anniversaries, gave her a generous allowance, placed the car at her elbow, and kept regular hours. Some of his married cronies had much more freedom. Some of them spent many an evening playing poker at the Club, bowling, or plotting assignations at distant vacation spots. Bob sat at home. He read the evening paper, listened to his favorite radio programs, answered all his wife's questions, and went to bed promptly at eleven. What else a man could do to be a good husband he could not imagine.

To pretend to himself that he had no interest in younger and more attractive women would have been a deception beyond his reach. He did not live against the grain. He was a male, and in the way of the male since times ancient he liked certain things. He recognized these things when he saw them and he responded almost with the simplicity of a reflex. Good food he loved and ate and stored in fat—though Mary said love of food was among the grosser pleasures. She smoked and drank but said she did not really care for such things. It was the fashion to smoke and sometimes to drink a little when playing bridge. She said books and intellectual talk and an interest in Bretton Woods and Henry Breuil's Upper Palaeolithic were a part of the civilized life. Bob did not dispute her theses. He listened politely and forgot them. His job was to make money and vote the right ticket, and he was a humble man who stuck to his job.

In comparison with the affairs of most of his friends, Bob's had been trivial and few. He was not handsome and he did not have a way. Even as a young man he had found the going hard. Trying to seduce a woman now and then, usually his secretary or another in the office, had been a kind of avocation with him; and he had given to it the same plodding persistence that he gave to his business. When successful, as now and then he had been, he regarded the circumstances as a miracle. He was so grateful that after the girl wearied of him and turned to another he continued to feel for her a fatherly kindness. Some of his friends laid siege to girls with dash and fervor and gifts and swept them off their giddy legs, but that was not Bob's way and he knew his limits. He approached a girl as if she were a pile of statistics.

His great problem was not his mediocre accomplishments as a lover. It was the fact that his wife made him feel guilty, and guilt for Bob Graham was a confusing and alien emotion. Against Mary's suspicions he had long ago contrived a defense. Some men took flowers or candy home. Some, after an especially gratifying conquest, ebulliently called their wives and suggested a gay evening out. One, after lying with another woman, always wrote a poem to his wife, and the wife had proudly cherished the verses and said she hoped to find a publisher for them. Such defenses Bob could never have carried off convincingly and he did not try. As a matter of fact, his defense against Mary was not a conscious design of his own making. Quite unperceived by him it had developed through the years and become one of his habits.

When he felt a need to protect himself against Mary's accusing stare he would work up a rage and charge her with misconduct. He never accused her of having a lover, though of late he wondered unhappily about a bridge instructor with the phoney name of Moliere Luis. Bob's accusations were vague and indirect and consisted chiefly of storm and bluff. They were intended to make Mary feel so guilty that she would stop suspecting him. He always spoke of their home, their children, of the time when they were married, of the disastrous effects a scandal would have on his business. In the hands of an able actor such an attack might have confused and baffled a shrewder woman than Mary, but Bob was a ham actor and he never knew, after a scene was done, whether he had succeeded or failed. But he persisted because this was the only defense he had.

On the day this chronicle opens he first glanced sharply up and down the street; and when he saw no sign of his wife he squared his shoulders and began to prepare for the meeting. He felt dreadfully guilty, perhaps because his new secretary had a gorgeous body; but he had to cover several blocks on the way home and that would give him time to work up a good fury.

Bob was not a person who could arouse anger merely by stimulating it. He had to think of things he disliked and dwell on them and feel out the limits of their ugliness. Today he thought first of a dead president whom he had always regarded as a bureaucratic monster intent on destroying American business; and then dwelt on all the senseless and infernal questionnaires that came to his office. If he had been a prisoner in Dachau he could not have felt more beaten down and confined.

After pacing a block he was feeling pretty wrathful His complaints, indeed, were so real and so many, and his profits so reluctant in their race with taxes, that he almost forgot his purpose while luxuriating in anger. From red tape his mind turned to his income tax, and he recalled some stories he had recently heard. A friend had said that it had become a practice with members of the medical profession to shove five or ten or twenty cash dollars into their pockets each day and not enter these sums in their books. When Bob realized that he had to file a return on every cent and that his books were audited, he snorted with rage. The whole gouging policy of government, he could plainly see, conspired against the men who kept books, and candidly intended to bankrupt all men who were honest. Then the country would be in the complete possession of crooks and bureaucrats, between whom Bob could see little difference by the time he reached his front door.

He fetched up there, startled and confused. Remembering his new secretary with a wave of warmth like the flush of straight whisky, he realized with dismay that he had no male name to hurl at Mary. He paused to think of one. There was the teacher of bridge, the foppish and spurious Luis, who moved from home to home and sat with the ladies to instruct them in the fine points. Rumor said that he did more than that.

When Bob opened the front door and entered he was ready to have the matter out. It seemed to him now, as it had seemed so many times when he came home with a troubled conscience, that Mary was guilty . . . .

"Mary!" he called sharply, as he turned to the living-room.

Mary was not there. Bob crossed the dining-room and looked into the kitchen. There was a new maid busy at a table.

"Where's Mrs. Graham?" he asked.

"How should I know?"

"Is Mrs. Graham home?" asked Mr. Graham stiffly.

"She dressed to go out."

"Ohhh!" said Bob, as if smelling fresh evidence. "Did she take the car?"

"You might look out and see."

Bob looked from a kitchen window and saw the car by the garage. He did not like this situation. While waiting for Mary his rage would thin out and then he would have to postpone the matter.

"Did she say where she's going?"

"She don't tell me such things."

The maid was in her thirties and not unattractive; and suddenly Bob felt an unusual interest in the salad she was making. He moved over to the table by her, and peered intently at a hash of greens and juices, but he was sharply conscious of the woman whose arm gently touched his sleeve. The touch stirred him. Bob was always more thrilled by the casual preliminaries of wooing than by the embrace itself.

"It looks good," he said.

"I guess it will be."

He fancied something coy in her way of speaking. He moved a little closer, affecting grave interest in the salad, but hoping really to feel her thigh against him. He sniffed like a seasoned epicure.

"It smell good?" she asked.

"Wonderful!" he cried.

"What is wonderful?" asked a cool voice.

Bob turned and saw his wife in the doorway. Hot blood rushed to his face, and in a clumsy effort to hide his confusion he strode past his wife and went to the living-room. "Mary!" he called. "Come here, please!" He knew that he was not angry enough, and so to whet his rage he thought frantically and desperately of all the things about the Roosevelts which he abhorred. Then again he said, "Mary!" hoping that his voice would be cold and incisive.

Mary entered the room. To her husband she looked as if she had spent the afternoon in a beauty parlor.

"Mary—" he said, with a stout thick gesture at all the evils of life.

But Mary cut him short. "Robert," she said—and when she addressed him as Robert she was in no mood for monkey-business—"Robert, this affair will have to stop!" She seemed very angry. She caught her breath after she spoke and raised a jeweled hand to her throat.

"Mary," he said, beginning to feel a little stricken, "this man, this Loose or whatever his name is—"

"Robert!" The word scattered his thoughts. Mary went to the kitchen and sent the maid on an errand, and when she came back she paced the floor. She was angry. There could be no doubt of that. "There are some things I must say to you . . . Robert, will you sit down?"

Bob sank limply to a chair. He felt now as he felt when a federal auditor looked over his books. "This man—" he said.

"This woman, you mean! In the last five years before the war we had six different maids. Most of them quit without warning. I did not understand at the time why they left. I never suspected that when my back was turned you slipped into the kitchen to help prepare the salads!"

"Me?" asked Bob, astonished.

"I won't stand the indignity of it," Mary went on. "I've known for a long time that most of you men are women-chasers but I have had faith in my husband. Just the same, there are some things I won't tolerate. Even in your sly affairs you show no taste, no discrimination. I mean," she said furiously, "that there are different levels even in sin, and you seem to prefer the lowest level. There are women in this town who are my social equal, and some of them are not unapproachable, I suppose; but your taste runs to the scullery, to the women who wash dishes and iron clothes. Even in your odious fornications you have the taste of a clown!"

The bitter accusations had emptied Bob's mind of everything but cloudy astonishment. Still—

"I realize," Mary resumed, speaking with angry bitterness, "that I am not so attractive as some women. I am middle-aged and—well, yes, I have a paunch. I guess I have always been the slow and plodding and honest type, with old-fashioned ideas about home and family and married life. But heaven knows I have been devoted—"

On the margin of Bob's consciouness a recognition was lurking like the insistent and unhappy memory of a thing forgotten.

"I have been devoted," Mary was saying, "to my husband and children and church, to those homely and simple things that used to be regarded as the basis of civilization. I have liked quiet evenings at home . I have liked to sit with the paper, knowing that my husband was present . . . ."

The notion on Bob's consciousness was moving in and troubling him but the meaning of it he was still unable to grasp. It was like a well-known name that had slipped from memory and now presented itself in forms that were strange but exasperatingly familiar.

"When we were married, we were only kids, and maybe we loved one another, maybe we only thought we did; but we took vows to love, honor, and cherish. I have thought that the years brought us closer in understanding and faith—in, well, in those deeper things that count. We have had the ups and downs of married life but there were children to

bless our union." Mary turned in her pacing to look at him. "For a long time now I have known you were losing interest in your home—and in me," she said, giving to the last words a sharp poignancy. "I have looked at myself in the mirror; I am not, goodness knows, what I used to be, and perhaps what I used to be was nothing ravishing. Maybe I was never the right woman for you; but if you must have other women in your life now, I have the right . . . ."

The idea troubling Bob, the memory almost but not quite within reach, still eluded his persistent effort to grasp it. He was not angry now. He was bewildered. His eyes never left Mary's face as she moved up and down the room.

"If there should be public talk—you know, the sly malicious joy of married persons talking about the troubles of other married persons, why, I don't have to tell you that such talk would ruin us. Business people have to have the good opinion of the public. Certain professional people need not be so careful. But in the kind of business you have—"

Bob got to his feet.

"Sit down!" Mary cried. "We may as well settle this thing now. No matter how much your flirtations may shame me, I do not think that intelligent people—at least not intelligent people who are also matured—allow them to break up a home—certainly not a home that has had children. I am only asking you, Robert, to be discreet and to show a little taste."

"Mary, what are you driving at?"

"As for coming home and catching you in clandestine situations with the maid—"

"You never did!" Bob cried.

"You don't have to behave like an illiterate country lout. Even when sinning, it is possible to keep one's dignity, one's sense of values, one's—"

The doorbell rang. Mary went to the door and opened it, and Moliere Luis, tall and dark and handsome, stepped inside.

"I hope I'm not late," he said, bowing from the waist. "Good evening, Mr. Graham."

Bob did not speak. He stood like a wooden man and scowled.

"I'm all ready," Mary said. "We are playing off the semi-finals this evening," she added, turning to her husband; and before he could read her intent she crossed the room and kissed him lightly on his mouth. "I'm leaving the car and I'll be home by midnight but don't wait up for me. The maid will set on your dinner."

In the next moment she was gone, with a handsome bridge instructor bowing her out. The door closed and Bob was alone. With a *vast* and dismaying silliness engulfing him, he stared for a long while at the door; and during this while, several impulses fought for possession of his will. He might go to the Club, or, now that Mary had gone for the evening and left the car home, he might take his new secretary for a drive. But at last like an old man he straightened and shrugged and

looked round him, noting one by one, as if he were adding up his income tax exemptions, all the old familiar things of his home. Then his roving gaze came to the bathroom door, and impulsively, eagerly, and without the slightest notion of what moved him, he decided to take a bath.

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The Editors.

Four Rocky Mountain Novels

By RAY B. WEST, JR.

THE four most important works of fiction to appear from the Rocky Mountains have all been published since 1939, the year Vardis Fisher won the Harper Prize with his novel, *Children of God.* This was followed by Maurine Whipple's *The Giant Joshua,* another Mormon novel, and by Walter Van Tilburg Clark's *The Ox-Bow Incident,* in 1940. Three years later Wallace Stegner completed his first full-length novel, *The Big Rock Candy Mountain,* and with these four books, fiction in the Rocky Mountains had come of age, displaying not only a maturity of treatment, but a diversity of style and subject-matter.

Mr. Fisher and Miss Whipple were born and raised in small Mormon communities of Idaho and Utah. Neither Mr. Clark nor Mr. Stegner was born in the region, but Wallace Stegner was still very young when he was brought into northern Montana with his family, and he received most of his education in the schools of Salt Lake City and the University of Utah; likewise, Mr. Clark was a young boy when his father was appointed president of the University of Nevada, and he thus spent his early years in Reno. The extent of the influence of the region upon these authors can be judged by the extent to which they have made use of their regional background in solving their fictional problems, or, to put it another way, the extent that the region has influenced their choice of subject matter and the treatment of it.

It can never be known, I suppose, exactly how much artistic talent is wasted in a frontier community, because sensibility is nothing without expression, and expression comes only with a measure of technical training and leisure. The early West provided little of either. In regard to such influences, Bernard DeVoto has written of his home-town, Ogden, Utah: "In the town as it was in my early childhood there was little interest in books, no general literary taste, only such love of reading as was inherited in isolated families or might develop by itself." There was, however—and I think Mr. DeVoto has slighted this aspect of the West—a kind of cultural center represented by ethnic groups in certain

isolated communities, and the Mormon culture (regardless of what might be thought of it as theology) did represent an institutionalized cultural core which provided a pre-conceived attitude, a scale against which personal experience could be evaluated with some kind of satisfaction. On the whole, however, it is true that most of the West lacked any means of achieving a degree of personal integration with the wilderness, and the early years (even more than is true of most pioneer settlements) were years of chaos and experiment. It is, therefore, not surprising to discover that the earliest writing—aside from private journals and diaries or the reports of explorers from the East and from Europe—came, like the novels of Myron Brinig of Montana, from the ethnic settlement with a western version of the farm story already popular in the Midwest and South.

Vardis Fisher's early novels were in this general tradition, with their emphasis upon the primitive cruelty of life in the barren Antelope Hills country of Southern Idaho. *Toilers of the Hills,* his first novel, is a story of settlement, a detailed account of the difficulties encountered by a family sent out to reclaim the native, sage-covered soil of the Snake River valley. In its general outline, it follows the method of the farm-family saga of other regions, differing from them primarily in the uncontrolled violence of the emotion expressed against the barbarities and animal-like cruelties of the frontier settlement. The same general tone continues in the second novel, *Dark Bridwell,* but with a measure of control achieved by a closer focus upon a central character. Both of these early works anticipate the tetralogy (the almost strictly autobiographical series of novels with which Mr. Fisher gained his first nationwide recognition), particularly the first volume which employs an identical setting, but with the three following volumes the reader is carried, for the first time, away from the small Mormon community and into the outside world, first to Salt Lake City, then to Chicago and New York. The theme of the tetralogy, Wallace Stegner has called " . . . the record of a brilliant and tortured mind weaving itself a dark web of near-insanity because of the conflict between impulse and inherited false idealism." The series represents, however, an inverted form of idealism, utilizing the contrasts between a brutal and dehumanizing environment and the extreme sensitivity of the central figure.

Children of God, appearing in 1939, represents at first glance, a complete break with the series of eight novels which preceeded it. It is essentially, the story of the Mormon migration west from Nauvoo, Illinois, to Salt Lake City, though including in its scheme the early days of the church in New York, Ohio, and Missouri, and continuing to the time of the manifesto prohibiting polygamy several years following the death of Brigham Young. In its general tone and selection of events it is an historical epic, and it succeeds admirably in capturing the whole heroic atmosphere of the Mormon trek, its idealism, fanaticism, devotion, humor, and tragedy. Its action is concerned, for the most part, with the historical

conflicts between the Mormons and their enemies, the occasional disagreements among the Mormons themselves, as well as the problems of polygamy, political recognition, and social adjustment.

The novel is composed of three parts, the first centering around the Mormon "prophet," Joseph Smith, and covering the period preceding the westward migration; the second, and most important, with Brigham Young in the leading role, relating the journey and the early days of Utah settlement; the third allowing the emergence of a minor historical figure, who has served as a unifying character from the beginning of the book but who finally breaks with the main body of authority at the time of the voluntary repeal of polygamy. The historical outline was as familiar to Vardis Fisher as the natural surroundings of the Antelope Hills. In his mind—as in the minds of all Mormons, particularly in the small outlying communities—the stories of Joseph Smith, of Brigham Young, of the original company who came west in '47, of the handcart expeditions, the conflicts with the federal government over territorial authority and polygamy had taken on the nature of a myth. Though the ideals which had brought his own parents into the Idaho hills were no longer valid, the courage with which the homesteader met his eventual defeat was admirable. Likewise, the empire of Brigham Young's dream was doomed, according to Mr. Fisher, but the vigor with which that dream was held blasted the wilderness and set up the earliest and most successful settlement in the West. It is the tone of high seriousness and admiration which permeates *Children of God,* and which (despite its opening somewhat "clinical" examination of the "divinity" of Joseph Smith) accounts for its unity, its effectiveness, and probably its popularity. It creates an heroic stature for Brigham Young, and it treats the major events with an epic seriousness, many of the minor characters and events in a vein of epic comedy. It might be said that if the early novels of Mr. Fisher are an examination of his environment, an examination and an evaluation, *Children of God* represents a celebration of it. For all that, it is, however, no less an evaluation.

Other Mormon novels have been less pretentious, and the second most popular of them, Maurine Whipple's *The Giant Joshua,* represents, in many respects, a contrast to *Children of God.* Its tone is similar, differing however in degree, so that it might be called, for want of a better word, lyrical. While Mr. Fisher was concerned with the whole sweep of the Mormon westward movement, Miss Whipple concentrated upon a single settlement: what has become known as the Dixie Colony in Southern Utah. Located 300 miles south of Salt Lake City in a valley which within the space of a few miles drops from an altitude of 6000 feet above sea level to only a few hundred feet, the settlements surrounding the community of St. George have a climate resembling that of Southern California, and it was here that Brigham Young, in his attempt to make his Utah empire self-sufficient, established his winter home and set his colonizers to growing cotton, tobacco, and developing the culture

of semi-tropical fruits. It was, in the early days, probably the most colorful of all Mormon settlements.

The story itself is focused upon a young woman convert to Mormonism, who very early becomes the only slightly unwilling bride of an older church dignitary—his third wife. From this point on the action drops into the background, threading its way slowly—not always faultlessly—thorugh a maze of descriptive passages, descriptions of characters, or frontier customs, of clothing, and of a series of communal events such as the construction of an irragiation system, trouble with the Indians, the building of a tabernacle and later the first Mormon temple in the territory, as well as the periodic visits of Brigham Young and other Mormon officials. Less than justice was done by one reviewer who characterized Miss Whipple's method as "undigested research." This might have been true, had the author been treating her subject from the point of view of Mr. Fisher. Actually, what she achieves finally is the most complete report of a small pioneer community on record, a kind of western museum, but where each object is personalized by its association with the characters, set in its proper place in the community. It is not quite saved from sentimentality by its earthy and forthright prose style, though it does avoid giving the kind of offense which a less successful handling might have given. It is a variation of the local color story, but with all the advantages and none of the "falseness" of the guide book type produced by the professional journalist who knows only the externals. Miss Whipple's treatment suggests again the value of the Mormon myth, which attempts to encompass all the problems arising from the establishment of an unified religious-social group. It is rich in specialized incident, a result partly from the attempts of the settlers to achieve a measure of psychological protection against outside influences. It is a folk crystalization, highly susceptible to exterior representation, and we recognize its meaning even in the title itself. The giant cactus of the Southern Utah desert—the Joshua tree—like the characters in the novel, draws a meager sustenance from the arid soil, but its pronged arms are outstretched toward heaven. It is this double focus (the earth and the dream) which gives depth to the historical conception, and it serves Miss Whipple as it did Vardis Fisher in *Children of God*.

But such a concept it not new, and it is not confined to the portrayal of Mormon society. The Mormon story represents an isolated and unique case in that it represents a special religious group in contrast to the chaotic cruelty of the natural wilderness. The same humanizing struggle was in progress elsewhere in the region, and Walter Van Tilburg Clark has applied it to the particular problems of the cattle range in his novel *The Ox-Bow Incident*. The struggle here is not for religious freedom, not for a particular brand of spiritual salvation represented in the Mormon creed, but for an all-embracing, general concept of simple justice. One suspects that Mr. Clark began, not with the specific historical fact, as did the Mormon authors, but that he saw the moral fact in all its general implications and then set about to clothe it in an objective sequence of

events. In so doing, however, he drew upon all of the physical and psychological resources of western history; above all, he utilized the heterogeneity of character which the various success-seeking enterprises of the West supplied. In its rigid simplicity of plot-structure, his novel is almost classical in design. Its style (despite the fact that it is a narrative told in the first person) is almost coldly dispassionate. Its theme, the miscarriage of a mob attempt to achieve justice, is heightened and emotionalized by the steady progression of events preceding and following the lynching of three supposed cattle thieves. Its richness of texture is gained by the diversity and interplay of character types representing the full range of possibility inherent in the subject matter. The narrator is a kind of chorus, a participator in the events, but certainly not the central figure. If there is a "hero" it is Davies, the store owner and unofficial moralist of Bridger's Wells, who is the spokesman for the idea of legal procedure because he believes that it is only through "due process of law" that injustice can be avoided. It is upon this that Mr. Clark has put almost the full burden of remorse at the end of the story where it is determined definitely that the mob has lynched three innocent men.

> "Now do you see," he said triumphantly, like all he wanted to do was make himself out the worst he could. "I knew those men were innocent. I knew it as surely as I do now. And I knew Tetley could be stopped. I knew in that moment you were all ready to be turned. And I was glad I didn't have a gun."

Davies is not an heroic figure, except in a new sense—he is a pacifist. Even with his concept of justice, he was glad he could not use force to save the lives of three innocent men. Farnley comes nearer to the traditional type. He is the friend of the man reported killed by the cattle rustlers, and he is quickly moved to action. But even he is displaced as leader of the mob by Tetley, the confederate officer who had, for reasons unknown (though it is assumed, with an unemotional lack of interest in such matters typical of the West, that he was a man persecuted by a sense of sin or of guilt) transplanted his Southern plantation into the Nevada desert. He participates only to initiate a sensitive and tortured son into the active life. Tetley has the outward shell of the "hero" and that is all. Besides him there are Winder, the stage driver; Osgood, the Baptist preacher; Sparks, the Negro; Mapes, the deputy sheriff; Ma Grier, masculine and spoiling for any kind of action; and Gil, the friend of the narratory; but the fact is that the spotlight is not put upon any of these characters except Davies for any length of time. The whole action might be said to represent a multiple tragedy only, with the degree and kind of emotion varying according to the worth and kind of the various characters, but with the burden of remorse falling upon the only person with the ability to verbalize his conflict: the moralist, Davies.

But to say this is to say no more than that it is not a tragedy at all in the traditional sense. It comes nearest to what has been called the "tragedy of character," though falling short because of the obviously intentional incompleteness of individual character portrayal and the use

which is made of the characters to represent levels of symbolic reference. It does, however, move the reader to an accumulated sense of horror by the steady and relentless movement of the act to its completion, to pity for the majority of the characters, who are seen to be motivated by a reasonable ethical cause, but who are defeated by an insufficiency of intellect or overweening of passion. The novel supplies, in addition, a pleasure aroused by the ironical juxtaposition of character against character, and, as in the case of Miss Whipple and Mr. Fisher, of idealism and reality, until it becomes finally a highly original variation of a clearly recognizable pattern. It is a version of the most common of all western themes, and one suspects that much of the sense of originality comes, exactly, from the fact that Mr .Clark felt the necessity to avoid the commonplaces of the popular western story of the pulps and the cheap novels.

Walter Van Tilburg Clark, then, as well as Vardis Fisher and Maurine Whipple, has made use of material which only the time and place could make available to them. The Mormon myth and the struggle for justice and security in a frontier community represents a form of cultural inheritance which is as important to the novelist as the study of techniques and the formalized learning which have come, with any degree of efficiency for the western writer, but recently. The creation of the hystorical myth has grown out of the same need that motivates man to any examination of the past, racial, national, or in the broader framework of humanistic achievement, and the ultimate value of such a concept lies in its utilization as a standard for a contemporary ordering of nature; that is, for the stabilization of human attitudes as represented in group culture or for the reflection and examination of that culture by the creative artist. Thus, Wallace Stegner in his latest novel, *The Big Rock Candy Mountain,* while concerned with more nearly contemporary events, still views his characters and his action through the perspective of historical events, in terms of what might be called the most general mythological portrayal of all—the myth of the frontier.

Mr. Stegner's novel still retains the epic frame-work, but its theme is based upon the recognition that the West is no longer a scene for heroic action of the type celebrated by Vardis Fisher, a problem at once more complex and more sophisticated than that of the earlier novels. In addition, the author makes use not of a single locale, not of a unique and special group, but of the entire Rocky Mountain area from Saskatchewan, Canada, to Reno and Salt Lake City. The central figure, Bo Mason, begins life in the Middle-West. Endowed naturally with every talent that usually makes for the successful man of action, curiosity, daring, and physical strength, he is driven westward by an overwhelming desire to "strike it rich."

> He had a notion where home would turn out to be . . . —over the next range, on the Big Rock Candy Mountain, that place of impossible loveliness that had pulled the whole nation

westward, the place where the fat land sweated up wealth and the heavens dropped lemonade.

There is little recognition of moral problems in Bo Mason's dream, because that battle had been won before he was born. Bo was confronted only in his personal relations by the necessity which represented the special problem of the characters of *The Ox-Bow Incident*—the psychological necessity to replace chaos with order—and as a result there is in him no real struggle for moral integration, an inability to distinguish between the values of one activity over another. He died a defeated, bewildered, and bankrupt speculator, by his own hands in the lobby of a cheap Salt Lake City hotel.

"He was a man who never knew himself, who was never satisfied, who was born disliking the present and believing in the future. . . . He wore out his wife and broke her heart, he destroyed one son and turned the other against him. At the end he degenerated into a broken old man, sponging a bare living and sustaining himself on a last gilded, impossible dream; and when he could no longer bear the indignities which the world heaped upon him, and when the dream broke like a bubble, he sought some way, out of an obscure and passionate compulsion to exonerate himself, to lay the blame onto another."

This is an astute—even perhaps brilliant—examination of the character of Bo Mason, suggesting as it does the impossibility of the "gilded" dream, the false idealism for which Bo stood. They are the words of the author through the consciousness of Bo Mason's one remaining link with the world—his son, Bruce. Beginning as a foil and contrast to his father, Bruce has begun by the time of his father's death to recognize his own dreams and to realize that it was compounded, in part, of his parents' errors. The relationship of Bruce to his father is the relationship of Mr. Clark's characters to their environment. Other authors might have called it the moralizing influence of the characters' contact with evil, but it is signficant that few of the Rocky Mountain authors have seen evil as anything more than a combination of environmental circumstances. Bruce, thinking back over his father's life, says:

> Perhaps that was what it meant, all of it. It was good to have been along and to have shared it. There were things he had learned that could not be taken away from him. Perhaps it took several generations to make a man, perhaps it took several combinations and re-creations of his mother's gentleness and resilence, his father's enormous energy and appetite for the new, a subtle blending of masculine and feminine, selfish and selfless, stubborn and yielding, before a proper man could be fashioned.

But the end is the same—to fashion a proper man, a proper society. The evil in Bo Mason consisted in his failure to achieve what he, with his great talents, felt that he was capable of achieving, his inability to compromise with the society which was emerging from the frontier, his confusion in defeat. Brigham Young and the settlers of the Dixie Mission might have said it otherwise. Their dream consisted in a heaven and a

hell as well as the earth. They would have said Bo was possessed of the devil. That is the difference, but there are similarities too. For Bruce and for the settlers of the Bridger's Wells, the fulfillment of the dream lay in the future, not in the present. The tragedy of *The Ox-Bow Incident* is that Mr. Clark's characters, like Bo Mason (though his dream is a false one), attempted to achieve a kind of perfection through their own individual and all-too-human judgment. Call it what you will—Heaven, the Big Rock Candy Mountain, the idea of justice—it all amounts to the same thing: the struggle to fashion order out of the chaos of the individual mind and the natural universe, and it is significant that the novelists of the West recognized this as their proper fictional theme.

Contemporary with the actual events, nothing seemed more meaningless to the outside observer than the activity of the frontier. The Mormon question, the emigration to the gold fields of California and Colorado, the problems of land-grabbing and cattle-rustling were great topics in the eastern newspapers of the day. The problem has been to evaluate the motives of such multifarious activity, and we know now that artistic objectivication is only the final stage in that labor. It has, however, in the literary history of all time, followed a recognizable pattern, beginning generally with an epic utilization of the myth and progressing, with the aid of a clearer understanding and improved technical facility, to a conscious application of the myth to contemporary events. The process is, of course, not quite so clearly defined, and it is confused in the history of Rocky Mountain writing by the fact that the region does not present a true development from primitive understanding and concept to a high degree of cultural awareness. It was an area settled by a people whose primitivism was only relative, induced by the types of people attracted to the frontier and by the inability of the settlers to transport highly complex cultural machinery into the barren wilderness. The degree to which this general development is true, however, may be judged by the extent to which this pattern is representative of the four authors under consideration.

There is, of course, little that is new in this interpretation. Its originality consists in the kind of facts with which the author deals—his subject matter—in the specific, not the universals. Bo Mason and Brigham Young interest us in the particularities of what they saw and in the relationship between the fact and the dream. Bo's tragedy moves us not only in the degree that we recognize and share his dream, but also in the degree to which we recognize the fallacy and implications of it. The chief value of the Rocky Mountain author is that he satisfies a need which is not unique, for the clarification of the relationship of the myth with the facts. The remarkable thing about this body of writing is not, as had been long supposed, the fact that it was late in arriving, but that what we have is as competent and aware of its obligation as the present four novels indicate it to be.

TO A LOVER OF PERFECTION

By BREWSTER GHISELIN

I fear your dream: rock-narrowed by the sea,
The traveling shade and foam around every shore,
Fronded with palm enough for friends to share,
Calmed by the waves' and the winds' natural sigh;
An omphalos within a sphere of light
Where a few bolder of the brave and wise
May Eden the mainland fever from their ways
And save the germinal heart inviolate.

There they will learn how they must pay the cost:
In coin of anguish acrid of a need
Unbalmed by sums of silence in the ear
For weight and length of continental coast
And the continent of men they have denied
Beyond the compass of the coasting oar.

THE DALIAN PLAIN

By BREWSTER GHISELIN

She lies behind hot blinds, on a wide bed,
In shadow not for sleep. All afternoon
The pillow has been wet with sweat of tears.

Now past delirium, empty of her grief,
She sees those signs that watched her agony
Stare at her with the midwife face of truth.

Day is around her like a plain without
An end. Hot, far, the dry cicada rachets.
The dull wallpaper rose on rose repeats.

She sees the immense landscape of regret
Enambered in irrefutable light,

THE VISION OF GOD

By ELLIS FOOTE

The wind down these valleys,
And the night resumes its failures;
The coyotes and rattlesnakes have holes
And owls the night air,
All men their momentary satisfactions,
But the poet has not where to lay his head.

The wind down these valleys,
And the past pours in like sand.
The poet resumes his night of failures.
Owls ork in his memories.
Children chatter his knees.

The wind down these valleys
Shakes the borrowed door,—
The wind assumes the form of its failures,
Presumes a man,
"May I come in?"

The poet forswears his gearless solitude,
Resumes the wheel of habit:
"Have a chair."

"I represent"—
The wind down these valleys—
"The Fairside Community Church;
We would welcome you
War-workers
To our midst. You are in likelihood
Far from home.
But not so far that God and Christian
Kindliness cannot claim you.
Our services begin sharply at 11:00 A. M."

The wind is at all hours. In these valleys
Everything is sharp.

The poet (whose existence is for itself only)
Meekly reaffirms his identity as creator
Amidst godlessness.
The black encumbrance, inverted collar beyond
this life,
Bleak lie here in this wind,
Blows down his buts.
"In the day of death the Word will calm you."

In the day of death the wind will claim him.

His like does not represent a picture.
It is a trackless acreage.
The vision of God
Is the wind blowing down these valleys.

POSTLUDE

By CHARLIE MASTERS

This is the last sun that will ever know her
as pagan as himself, as shining-free,
hot-fingered after fact of bird and worm life,
touching all things with equal ecstasy.

The last sun that will ever see her roaming
unclocked as brindle cat, from yard to house,
entranced at dawn by the grey sparrow's chirping,
involved at dusk with the terrible, tiny mouse.

Her days of wise illiteracy are ended
and intimacy of house must now expand,
let in strange animals and starnger people,
until the crowded rug is foreign land.

When the next schoolbell rings she will be eager
with the wondrous girl-boy-teacher world to mix,
to learn the meaning of contemporary,
in the ancient bondage that begins with six.

Balance His, Swing Yours

By WALLACE STEGNER

THE ping of tennis rackets was a warm, summer-afternoon sound in the air as Mr. Hart came up through the hedge. He stopped to survey the grounds, the red roof of the hotel, the fans of cocopalms graceful beyond the white wall. Past the wall the coral rock broke off in ledges to the beach, and beyond the sand was the incredible peacock water of the Gulf.

February. It was hard to imagine, with that sun, the brown skins of the bathers between the palms, the ping of rackets. The whole place, to Mr. Hart's Colorado eyes, was fantastic—hibiscus and bougainvillea and night-blooming jasmine. He squirmed his shoulders against the itching warmth of his first sunburn, caught the previous afternoon, and ruminated on the hardly believable thought that to many people this summer-in-February paradise was a commonplace thing.

The sound of tennis led him past the shuffleboard courts and around a backstop cascading with scarlet bougainvillea. A girl was playing with the pro, and beyond the court, in lawn chairs, lay two of the three people Mr. Hart had so far met. His reaction was immediate. Good. Good it was the two boys, not the impossible Englishman who had descended on him at breakfast. He cut across the lawn toward them.

The young men in the chairs, one very blonde, one dark and impressively profiled, did not stir. They lay in their swimming trunks, inert and sprawling, and when Mr. Hart asked, "Were you saving these other chairs?" they looked up indolently, two loafing demigods with mahogany hides. The blond one lifted his towel out of a chair, and Mr. Hart sat down with a sigh.

"What a place!" he said.

The blond one—Thomas, Mr. Hart remembered—turned his head. He seemed a pleasant sort of boy. "Like it?" he said.

Mr. Hart lifted his hands. "It's incredible. I had no idea—I've never been down before. Even the fishing boats coming in in the evening are a nice institution. Have you tried the fishing?"

"Once or twice," Thomas said. He slumped further down in his chair. Mr. Hart found a pack of cigarettes, stretched to pass them over

Thomas' body. He got a shake of the head, no thanks, from the dark one, Tenney, but Thomas took one.

"I've been thinking I might hook up with a party," Mr. Hart said. "This water fascinates me. The water and these silly little mangrove islands. I've read about mangroves all my life—never saw one. Now I find they're not islands at all, not a spoonful of dirt in them, just clumps of ocean-going shrubs."

"Yeah," Thomas said. He lay with the cigarette between his lips, his eyes lidded like a lizard's against the sun. Tenney seemed to sleep.

"I guess I interrupted your siesta," Hart said. "I just can't get over this place. I'll keep quiet now."

"Not at all," Thomas said, but Mr. Hart leaned back and watched the tennis. He had no desire to intrude on people. And it was good tennis to watch, he admitted. But Eastern tennis, the rhythmical and somehow mechanical tennis of people who learned the game as a social accomplishment. In an obscure way he felt superior to it. He had learned in a different school, municipal hard courts, worn balls. Still, he felt he could lick three out of four of these mechanical marvels.

His eye was caught by Tenney's feet, big naked feet, arched like the feet of a statued Mercury and brown as stained wood, the leather thongs of the sandals coming up between great and second toes. They struck him as arrogant feet. The boy had a lordly air, sure enough. There was something really admirable in the way he and his companion lolled. This was their birthright, and their arrogance was simply acceptance of something perfectly natural and right.

The blond youth turned, and Mr. Hart nodded toward the court. "The girl has nice shots."

"One of these tennis drunkards," Thomas said. "Lives tennis twenty-four hours a day."

"I like to see that," Mr. Hart said. "I like to see people simply dissolve themselves in the thing that interests them. I can remember when I was that way about tennis myself."

"Oh," Thomas said. "You're a tennis player."

Mr. Hart shrugged deprecatingly. "Used to be, in a way. Haven't done much with it since college, just a game now and then.

"What college?"

"I grew up in the West," Mr. Hart said. "Went to the local cow college."

Tenney leaned toward them. "I hate to interrupt," he said, "but look what's bearing down on us."

He jerked a thumb. The impossible little Englishman, in his pink polo shirt, was walking springily on the balls of his feet down the path from the cocktail garden. "Oh, my God," Hart said.

The two were both looking at him. "Has he got to you, too?" Tenney said. His look of distaste had dissolved into cynical amusement.

"For an hour at breakfast," Hart said. "Why can't people like that

go to Miami, where they belong? Maybe we ought to run."

They smiled their relaxed, indolent smiles. "Lie and take it," Thomas said. "That's the least painful way."

Mr. Hart slid down in his chair and prepared his muscles for the relaxed indifference with which this interloper would have to be met. "But what a blowhard!" he said. "Did you know he was being bombarded from all sides to write a play for Cornell? My God."

He shut up abruptly. In a moment the British voice—vulgar British voice, Mr. Hart thought—was right above him. "Ah," it said. "Taking a little sun?"

"Hello," Thomas said, pleasantly enough. Tenney looked up and nodded. So did Mr. Hart. It was a cool reception, but it wasn't cool enough, Mr. Hart thought, for this rhinoceros to feel it.

"Topping day for it," the Englishman said. He sat down and took out his pipe, watching the tennis game while he filled and lighted. His fingers, holding the blown-out match, waved gently back and forth.

"She's not bad, you know," he said conversationally. "Pity she doesn't have a sounder backhand."

Mr. Hart regarded him coldly. "What's wrong with her backhand?" he said.

"Not enough follow-through," the Englishman said. "And she's hitting it too much on the rise."

Tenny said, grunting from his slumped chest. "She ought to be told."

The Englishman took his pipe from his mouth. "Eh?"

"You ought to put her right," said Mr. Hart.

All he got was a grin and wag of the head. "Not in front of these pros, you know. The blighters think they know it all."

Mr. Hart impatiently recrossed his neatly-crossed legs. "You sound as if you were an expert," he said, with just the suggestion of a slur. It was exactly the right tone, ambiguous without being insulting. Sooner or later anybody, confronted by that tone, would begin to wonder if he were wanted.

"Know a bit about it," the Englishman said. He waved his pipe at the court, talking too loud. "Watch her forehand, too. She's cocking her racket up too much at right angles with her wrist." His head moved back and forth, following a fast rally. "So's the pro," he cackled. "So's the pro, swelp me. Look at 'im!"

"The ball," said Mr. Hart, "seems to be going back and forth pretty fast."

"Ping-pong," the Englishman said. "Anybody who hit it instead of slapping it that way would have laid it away by now."

Tenney was lying back staring at the sky, where a man-o'-war hawk alternately soared and sped on dark, bent wings. Tenney was like a hawk himself, Mr. Hart thought. Dark and built for speed. The Mercury foot, and the arrogance to go with it. He was built to run down little

web-footed gulls like this Englishman and take their fish away from them. But all he did was stare at the sky and wag one foot over the footrest. Thomas, ordinarily more talkative, now seemed to be asleep. Mr. Hart simmered. It had been very pleasant, very quiet, very friendly, till this terrier with the big yap butted in.

". . . thing I miss in America," the Englishman was saying. "Never can get up a good game. Any public school boy in England plays a good game as a matter of course. Here nobody seems to."

The idea came gently to Mr. Hart's door, and he opened to it. It might boomerang, but he thought not. His mind went scornful. Pestered to write a play for Cornell. Like hell. Bothered to do articles for the *Britannica*. My Aunt Annica. Aldington wanting him to come in on an anthology. In a pig's physiology. British public school likewise. Tennis as well.

"It *is* hard to get a game, sometimes," he said. "If I wasn't afraid of getting out of my class I'd suggest we play."

"Yes," the Englishman said cordially. "Have to do that."

"How about this afternoon, now?"

Tenney started to whistle lightly. The whistle was encouraging to Mr. Hart. It said, Go ahead, pin his ears down.

"This weather might not last, even here," Hart said. "Little exercise'd do us good. That is, if you'd step down to my level."

"Oh, step down!" the Englishman said. "Not at all!"

"Let's have a round then. The court'll be empty in a minute."

The Englishman knocked out his pipe, looked back toward the empty cocktail garden, puckered his lips. He had a pulpy nose and prominent teeth. "I didn't bring a racket," he said. "Perhaps . . ."

"The pro'll have some."

The Englishman rose. "Very well," he said. "I'll go pop into my things." He went toward the hotel, walking springily, a preposterous, lumpy little blowhard, and Mr. Hart dropped a look of grim anticipation at the two lazy, amused youths.

"The International Matches," Tenney said. "Shall I cry 'Well struck, Cow College!' now and again?"

"Don't encourage me," said Mr. Hart. "I might start shooting for the little stinker's belt buckle."

The Englishman looked even more preposterous in shorts than he had in polo shirt and slacks. His muscles were knobbly, his bones stuck out like the elbows of characters in comic strips. Mr. Hart, leading the way onto the court, was aware of the young men watching from their somnolent chairs. It was as if he had made them a promise. Opening the can of balls he made another to himself. He was going to play every shot as if dollars depended on it.

"Here we go," he said cheerily, and wafted a warm-up ball across the net. From the very awkwardness of the Englishman's run he knew his plan was not going to boomerang. The goof looked as if he'd never

been on a court before. This, he told himself happily, was murder.

It was a murder that he enjoyed thoroughly. For three-quarters of an hour he ran the Englishman's tongue out, tricked him with soft chops that died in the clay, outran him with topped drives into the corners, aced him with flat services, left him going full steam in the wrong direction for an occasional American twist. He was playing carefully himself, not hitting anything too hard until he got a kill, and then plastering it with everything he had. He blessed the high altitude and worn balls of his youth which had made him learn to murder a high ball. The Englishman's game, when there was any, gave him little to hit except soft high bouncers, big as a basketball and begging to be swatted.

As he went about his methodical mayhem his amazement grew. The Englishman didn't have a thing. Then why in the world would he have the consummate gall to talk the way he had? Mr. Hart could not imagine; but he saw the two watchers in their chairs, and his unspoken compact with them kept him at the butchery. The Englishman got six points the first set, and his face was a little strained as they changed courts. You bloody upstart, Mr. Hart thought. This is where you learn to be humble. He stepped up to the service line prepared to skunk the Englishman completely, never give him a point.

In the middle of the set the two young men rose and stretched and picked up their towels. They lifted their hands and walked off toward the bath-houses, and Mr. Hart, a little disappointed at the loss of his audience, went on finishing the thing off. The Englishman was feeling his shoulder between shots now. Obviously, thought Mr. Hart, he has pulled a muscle. Obviously.

At five-love the Englishman walked up to the net. "I say, do you mind? I seem to have done something to my shoulder here. Can't seem to take a decent swing."

Mr. Hart picked up the ball can and his sweater. Without really wanting to, he let the alibi establish himself. "No use to play with a bad arm," he said. And looking at the grimace pretending to be pain on the little man's face, he said, almost kindly and to his own astonishment. "It was spoiling your game. I could see you weren't up to scratch."

"Makes me damned mad," the Englishman said. "Here I've mucked up your whole afternoon. Couldn't hit a thing after the first game or two."

"Too bad," said Mr. Hart. And so, condoling one another, they went back to the hotel. It was funny. It was, Mr. Hart decided while he was dressing, so damned funny he ought to be rolling on the bed stuffing covers in his mouth. That he was not, he laid to the complete incorrigibility of that dreadful little man. People like that would never see themselves straight. No innuendo, no humiliation, would ever teach them anything. Hopelessly inadequate, they must constantly be butting into situations and places where they didn't belong. Mr. Hart shrugged. Let him live. The hell with him. If he couldn't be overlooked, he could be avoided.

He brushed off his white shoes, felt his tie, and looked in the mirror. Nose and forehead pretty red. For an instant of irritation he wished he wouldn't always burn and peel before he tanned. There was some system—tannic acid, was it?—but he always forgot till too late. The regulars around here, he was sure, never peeled.

In the dining room there were flowers bright against the stiff linen on every table, and the ladder-like shadow of a palm frond fell across the floor from the west windows. Mr. Hart answered the headwaiter's bow and stepped down into the cocktail lounge. There was no one there except two waiters, the bartender, and some stuffed fish. Outside, however, several tables were occupied. At one of them sat Thomas and Tenney, and as Mr. Hart started over he noticed that they still wore sandals and no socks. Their arrogant feet seemed at home and unembarrassed. He wondered if they wore socks to dinner, and it crossed his mind that he might be overdressing. White jacket might look like ostentation. He didn't want that.

"Well!" said Mr. Hart, and sat down. "What's a good drink here?"

Tenney shrugged. His amber, remote, hawklike eyes were away off down the garden, then briefly on Mr. Hart. "Rum collins?"

Mr. Hart signaled a waiter. The three sat quietly while people came in twos and threes into the garden. The young men did not speak of the tennis match. Neither did Mr. Hart. And he did not remember, until a small party came pushing a blue wheelbarrow with a sailfish in it, that he had meant to go down and watch the boats come in.

There were a gray-haired man and a blonde older woman and a wind-blown, pretty girl in the party. They came through the garden in triumph, calling to people to witness. Everybody seemed to know them. Everyone got up and crowded around and admired. Thomas and Tenney went over with their glasses in their hands, and Mr. Hart rose, but did not want to push in. "Fifty-nine pounds," the girl said. "And I caught it. Little me." The tempo of the garden had picked up; the lazy afternoon was already accelerating into cocktail hour, dinner hour, the evening dance. Mr. Hart, standing at the edge of the crowd, thought what really pleasant fun it would be to spend a day that way. The fishing party seemed pleasant, agreeable people. And it would be fun to catch a thing like that sailfish. Lovely to see him break the peacock water.

"Come on," the girl said. "I'm buying the drinks on this one." She hooked arms with Tenney and Thomas, the gray-haired man picked up the handles of the wheelbarrow, and they went up the garden to a table under the hedge.

Mr. Hart stood a moment alone. Then he sat down. The chatter, the bright afternoon sounds, went over him, and he heard the fishing girl's brittle tinkle of laughter. The long light of evening lay over the palms and the flowering trees and the golf-green lawn. Waiters tipped the umbrellas sideways and lifted the steel butts from the holes and stacked the canvas against the hedge. Mr. Hart watched them; his eyes went beyond them to the party at the hedge table, Tenney and Thomas leaning forward,

no languor about them now, their talk animated.

Beside his own table he saw his immaculate buck foot. It irritated him, somehow, and he put it out of sight. The bronze feet of Tenney and Thomas, he noticed, were in plain view as they tipped their chairs forward to talk to the fishermen. The dead fish's fin stuck up from the blue wheelbarrow like a black-violet lacquered fan. It was while he watched them that the cold finger touched Mr. Hart, and he knew what it was.

The garden was full of people now, brown-faced, casual. They were necessary, Mr. Hart thought, to complete the picture. The whole garden, tipped with light through the palms, was like a Seurat. And he sat alone, outside the picture. There were two rings of moisture on the enameled table, left by the glasses of Tenney and Thomas. Very carefully Mr. Hart squee-geed them off with his thumb and finger and wiped his hands on his handkerchief. When he looked up he saw the Englishman, fantastically white and sluglike in this garden of brown demigods, standing in the doorway of the lounge in white jacket and ascot tie, looking around the tables.

For an instant Mr. Hart hesitated. He heard the brittle chatter and laughter from the other tables. His elbows felt the tug of hands, heard the voices saying, "Come on, let's have a drink on it," his bronze face felt the sun as he went with the others across to a corner table. . . .

His fingers went around the cold glass, raised it. With his other hand he signalled the Englishman standing in the doorway.

Smoke On The Snow

By GEORGE SNELL

HAM WARDLE poked the logs in the grate and watched the showering wood sparks bloom and fly into the black maw of the chimney. He threw a fresh pine log on the embers and jockeyed it into position with the poker. Then he stood up to his full height and stretched. He turned and winked at his wife who sat sewing in the rocker before the fireplace.

"Sure is comfortable inside on a night like this," he said. She nodded gravely and smiled at him.

Ham flexed his muscles by bending his thick-palmed hands at the wrists, working his arms at the elbows and breathing deeply. The fire blazing up with little reports seemed to impart its own cheer to him, and he danced a little clumsy jig.

"How you do go on for a man of your age," he wife said. Her gray eyes regarded him tolerantly; she earnestly believed that, except for Ham's unpredictable impulses and enthusiasms, he was the finest man she knew.

"I can't help it, can I," he said, "if I feel good? Believe me, I'm glad I don't have to be out on a night like this."

"Is it still snowing?"

"Nope, it's cleared off, and the moon's shining and it's pretty out, like—well, I'll tell you what it reminds me of. Remember those old movies we used to see years ago, how they'd have everything green when they wanted to indicate it was night? Well, that's how the snow looks tonight —everything clearcut and distinct, but a different strange color."

"If I wasn't so comfortable I'd get up and look."

Ham shrugged and reached for his pipe on the mantel. As he filled it, he looked about the room, and his solid face, the color of an Indian's to just above his eyebrows and from there to his strong short gray hair as white as a woman's arm, assumed a wholly contented expression. He thought of his sons, both of them married and doing well, and of his daughter who had gone to work in the town, and of his wife who certainly gave him as much as he was entitled to. She kept his feet solidly on the earth, and

that's where a farmer's feet belong. His eyes turned and contemplated her with a quiet and admiring glance, and she looked up from her sewing and saw it.

"What are you thinking about, Ham?" Miranda asked.

"Nothing," he said, tamping the heel of hot ash deeper into the pipe's bowl with a thick forefinger. "I was just thinking that it's mighty comfortable inside tonight."

"Yes, it is," she said.

Her words left the room silent save for the hissing of the log and the occasional report of a bursting resin pocket. But before Ham's pipe was a third smoked down both of them turned an ear toward the door; the crunch of heavy footsteps, screeching in the frozen snow, announced a visitor, and Ham arose regretfully and went to the door.

He admitted Jack Vowle, their nearest neighbor, and invited him to stand up to the fire and thaw out. Jack was a reedy-thin man, tall and spare, and one of his eyes was permanently closed from an accident with a hayfork years ago.

"Ham," he said as he put out his hands to the hearth and fixed his good eye strangely on his friend, "you been listenin' to the radio?"

Ham shook his head. "Miranda and me have been sitting here just enjoying our own company. Why, what's on the radio?"

"You ain't heard about the plane crash then?"

"No!"

"Well, a plane crashed right near here, Ham."

Miranda put down her sewing. She looked intently at Jack Vowle.

"Go on," Ham said.

"That's right," Jack said. "I heard it on the radio. They claim it's up on the Peak or somewheres near it."

"When did it happen?"

"This morning, I guess. They've seen flares tonight on the Peak. That's what I heard on the radio."

"They aren't all dead then," said Ham.

"Figure some of 'em must be alive, and why I come over, Ham: thev said they had reports Captain Veritt was aboard."

"No!"

Ham went quickly to the set that had a sweet potato plant in a bowl on the top and flicked the switch. "The poor devil," he said. "That's terrible."

"My, that's too bad," Miranda said. She had dropped the sewing in her lap.

"You see, they was flying too low is the only way they can figure it out, and pancaked onto the Peak somehow," Jack said. "I knew you'd want a-hear, Ham. You always paid particular attention to what this Captain Veritt was doin'."

Ham fussed with the dial until the music of an orchestra blared into the room.

"I guess they'll give more reports," Jack said. "What do you think of it, Ham; we never had a plane crack up this near."

"What kind of a plane was it?" Ham asked.

"One of them big transports."

"Are you sure about Veritt, Jack?" Ham asked. "I wouldn't doubt it, he's always flying. I suppose he was a passenger."

"I suppose. They said there was nine people aboard."

"They'll freeze to death if any of them are alive," Miranda said.

Ham looked at her with remote eyes. "Did you say flares?" he said to Jack.

Jack nodded.

Ham began to button the loose sweater he was wearing. He looked at Jack with the same remote expression. Miranda watched with dread as Ham buttoned his sweater tightly about his neck.

"I'm going out a minute," he said. "Jack, let's take a look at the Peak."

Jack didn't answer; he glanced uneasily at Miranda and was afraid to speak. Ham avoided his wife's eyes.

"Well, are you coming?" he said, and went to get his hat and coat.

"I—I just thought I'd come over and tell you folks," Jack said lamely. "I—"

Miranda started to sew again and she did not speak.

"Come on, Jack," Ham said, heaving into his mackinaw.

They walked away from the house with ringing footsteps in the hard snow until they could see the high shoulder of Granite Peak standing up in relief forty miles away. The night was moonless now and sharp with a clean wind blowing that was like a knife in the face. They looked up to the Peak of massive craggy granite and snow limned against the blue night haze, and stood still for a moment.

"My God, Jack," Ham said. He gazed steadfastly as if he expected to see a flare rise from off that bold white face.

They watched for some time, but nothing happened. At the uttermost top the wind blew the snow off the Peak in a constant spume that looked like cloud. The darker bases of riven rock, black ravines in the ribbed face, were shadowed in mystery. Timbered slopes and lower-lying farms at the foot of the Peak also were bleakly remote in the night, veiled in distance and zero cold.

Jack flapped his arms and stomped his feet. "Ain't much hope for em, Ham."

"Nephi Larsen once climbed Granite Peak," Ham said.

"Don't I know it! Not in the dead a-winter, though."

"It's always winter up there," Ham said. "Well, let's go in and see what the radio says."

II

A few hours later, about five in the morning, Ham made up his mind. The night-long reports showed there was hope. He backed the car out of

the garage and drove to Nephi Larsen's shack on Bitter Creek. Nephi was drying muskrat skins in the odorous warmth of his cabin, and not even exhibiting surprise at the early call, the man as always was pleased to see him and awkwardly hospitable; but Ham put all that aside. He said, "Nephi, could you climb Granite Peak?"

"Ay did," the Swede answered steadily. "Ay might could again."

Ham explained the circumstances that led him to ask, adding, "Would you go with me if I asked you?"

"Ay would go," Nephi Larsen said simply.

They began to talk about Nephi's traps and discussed the winter's catch. Again Ham was humble before this good man's unseeking devotion to him. The small matter of having lent a little money hardly justified the request of risking life; but without some sense of dedication, the search could not be undertaken.

As he drove home he wondered if, in some less articulately realized way, Nephi's feeling paralleled his for Jim Veritt, if on their different levels the loyalties and aspirations of men did not generally coincide. Yet that was hardly the situation; it approximated more nearly the condition in which envy and self-seeking have fallen away and love alone remains. Ham marveled to think that Nephi might regard him in such a way as to justify those lofty suppositions. As he drove along the highway hard-packed with snow in the gray morning he considered what he would need for the journey.

III

"It's foolhardy nonsense," Miranda said. She went right on making the food packs.

"I can't help it," Ham said. "This is something a man has to do."

His wife went ahead with the preparations, and Ham avoided further discussion. He was uncomfortable in her disapproval, but he knew that nothing she could say would dissuade him. She evidently knew it, too, because she said nothing more.

"Well," Ham said, "take care of the place. I won't be gone any more than if it was a fishing trip."

"All right," Miranda said. Ham got into the car and drove off quickly without looking back.

Nephi Larsen was ready. He gathered up his pack and climbed in beside Ham. They spoke little; but Ham felt a strange exhilaration. He did not even think of what he might find, but instead turned to old intimations of the real Jim Veritt, the shining figure out of his youth. He did not think of Jim as a man of his own age at all. The years were stripped from this image of incorruptible young manhood. Jim (or the memory of him) recalled his own blameless youth again, for they had been fresh in the world together, at school and later in the close brotherhood and personal revelation under fire in France. To him, Jim Veritt had been incomparably the newly-minted coin of young manhood in those days. He had always accomplished what he had set out to do; the man was a

living epitome of integrity. The miracle of Veritt was that he had already become a legend, known by the world for his exploits of daring and for his inviolate honesty. There had been something about an airman which took its quality from the medium of the air itself and was lonely, austere and unalterably faithful.

Yet in reality little was kown of Veritt as an individual. He was personally ubiquitous at the same time that he appeared to be inaccessible. He tried to keep his whereabouts unknown, and perhaps for that reason received more than his share of publicity.

Of all the men he had ever met, Ham loved Veritt best, bound in the memory of a youthful friendship stronger than most men know. The man was a wonder, and besides having become legendary for the feats he had accomplished was personally an enigma to all. Those who had come to know him in the days since he had achieved fame could not claim to understand him; their knowledge was superficial or even false. The only way you knew a man like Veritt was by the good fortune of meeting under circumstances that come seldom in a lifetime. When he read accounts of Veritt's life and peculiarities, Ham always smiled. How foolish it was to suppose that a few encounters with such a man could expose his real being. That that being could be extinguished was unthinkable; Ham could not believe in such a negation of the faith he had in the man or his legend.

Ham stopped the car in a familiar recess among pines at the Upper Forks of Bitter Creek. Nephi Larsen pointed to the mountain. "That's where ve go," he said.

And now, from where they stood, the Peak was no longer simply a distant immensity; Ham regarded the vast jagged mountain before them with a quailing heart, for now that he was close it seemed less accessible than ever. He could see that enormous tiers of riven rock piled one upon another composed this giant peak and that each stage upward would constitute the equivalent of an Alpine climb. From a distance the Peak seemed one fabulous rugged mass; the nearer view showed it to be a heaping of minor masses each towering like Himalayas until the final upflung tier seemed to sweep the ceiling of the sky itself.

Ham wetted his lips, and his eyes stung with cold as he remarked, "Up there, there won't be any secrets. If they are there, nothing on earth can hide them."

The morning was sunless. Larsen found green boughs to lay the base for a fire, and he observed cryptically that the day would be very cold. "But ve warm up," he added, preparing to make coffee from melted snow in his canteen.

IV

Conviction and the contemplative habit of mind do not often go hand in hand, Ham thought, as about noon when the sun was a dull eye in the center of the gray heavens he and Larsen sat facing each other across the fire. He regarded the Swede contemplatively; the man was iron or

he was stone with its eternal insentience. Whatever he was, he inspired in Ham chiefly a wondering awe. Yet this rocklike stability was no good at all uninformed with intent.

"Let's get started," he said.

"Yep, ve ban get on now," Nephi agreed.

They kicked out the fire. Larsen shouldered the duffle and would not relinquish any part of it, saying that he was used to this kind of work and that Ham should conserve his strength for the tough going ahead. They set their snowshoes to the soft snow with splaying feet outward to climb the hill.

The snowy incline seemed intent upon vanquishing them, for their progress was continually retarded by small avalanches of snow. Soft and powdery, the snow would rush down upon them from two or three yards ahead in a flurry that buried them to their knees. Floundering out of the slide, another swooping, fleecy torrent would descend upon them. In two hours they had gone only a few dozen rods, and the exertion brought sweat steaming to their faces, soaking their underclothing so that Larsen shook his head and looked grave.

"No good ve sweat," he said. "Better slow down some."

Ham realized that with the approach of evening and subzero temperatures, wet clothing would be dangerous. "We've got to climb. What can we do?"

"Better slow down some," Nephi said.

As Ham toiled along in Larsen's wake he was amazed at the man's indefatigability. He began to think of Nephi as an individual, too. Most people saw in him the possessor of no worthy attributes whatever. Ham's memory of Nephi's final falling out with society was fresh; and it was through his good offices alone that Nephi now walked the land a free man. If he hadn't paid Nephi's debts, land-grabbing swindlers would have had him behind bars. That slow-witted, trustful Swede had no attributes that would be advantageous in society.

Ham climbed slowly behind the tireless man, until it seemed that he had been doing nothing else all his life. The snow surrounding them created a hushed world inimically external. A hundred times Ham cursed the sifting powdery slides, and he cried out to the Swede against the snow, but the man only grunted and kept on silently digging his way upward.

"If you don't let me carry some of that duffle," Ham shouted, "I'm not coming any farther."

Larsen then let some of the pack come sliding down, and Ham shouldered it without speaking.

As darkness spread on the mountains Ham noticed a different quality in Nephi's methodical upward movement. The man's exertions were less sure; several times Larsen slipped and came swooping back upon Ham, tearing through the trajectory of snow like a bullet and stopping short. They saw a promontory of ice-encrusted rock and toiled slowly to it. Leveling off a harboring ridge, they were able to forage a few twisted faggots

of scrub brush under the sheltered side of the rock. Ham built a fire, taking half an hour at the task so that no scrap of wood was wasted. They settled down to rest and eat and drink smoking hot coffee.

It was always difficult to make conversation with the Swede; but Ham felt no real need to talk. In this hour of exhaustion no words could amplify the creature identity he felt with Nephi. They nodded by the fire, wrapped in every inch of bedding they had.

The fire lasted only an hour, and before the heat was entirely dissipated Ham noticed the growing cold. He spoke of it to Nephi, but the Swede only shrugged and grunted. Ham looked down into the valley and saw a few winking lights, dim and wavering as fireflies. He could not tell whether they came from his ranch.

As soon as the fire went out they got to their feet and started moving. The cold was so intense that inaction had already numbed their hands and feet. It was then about midnight, and Nephi said they were probably one-third of the way up. Ham asked about Nephi's former climb, but the Swede did not seem to want to talk about it. So Ham's mind reverted to what might be above. Jim Veritt is alive, he thought, that's all that is important. I've got to get him out. Other thoughts took shape in his mind; he wondered what Miranda was doing; but strangely all his past life, at this moment, seemed remote and uninimportant. He knew that he might not return to it, and somehow his apprehension of it seemed anaesthetized. He wondered what was passing in Nephi's brain. Nephi was a good man; he would come much nearer to attaining grace than most. His faith, if it was not founded on reliable precepts, was buttressed by works. The simple soul, Ham thought as he struggled wearily along, may find the answer where more complex minds become lost and discouraged and fail when the real trial is set.

V

The character of the snow changed quite abruptly. Instead of the powdery fine and maddeningly unstable texture underfoot it became crusted and firm where the wind had molded it in shards and sculptured hummocks against the granite outcroppings. The going was suddenly easier and they made better time.

The night cold increased. The prickling sensation of frozen moisture in his nose caused Ham continually to snort and break away the ice. Soon, however, that slight pressure was insufficient, and presently a muzzle of ice was attached to his nostrils. In attempting to break off the encrustation he brushed the skin of his nose and found that there was no sensation in his face.

They clambered over jutting crags and around forms of hardened snow. The wind's keen edge cut through the layers of clothing. Ham shivered and at the same time felt small rivulets of perspiration trickle from his armpits. Looking up now, he could see the grand turrets of the Peak swimming in the moonless, misty sky.

Nephi Larsen was toiling ahead of him. Ham heard a cracking report,

sharp and smart as a pistol shot. He glanced ahead and his eyes widened in horror as the whole icy side of the mountain began to slip with a tearing savage thunder slowly, and with increasing speed avalanched upon Nephi Larsen.

He stared stupidly; he could not believe his eyes; what was on their retina had been wiped off. The world whirled in darkness. He began to call Nephi's name. He moved ahead in the hampering snow, shouting. He flailed the snow with his duffle bag and yelled until he was hoarse.

The man was gone. He was snuffed out. It was Ham's responsibility alone. He was to blame. He had sent the Swede hurtling to his death as surely as if the plot had arisen in his brain. He slumped to a sitting position, supported by the waist-deep snow. And Larsen had climbed the Peak once in his life. He had climbed it once, and perhaps once was all that was permitted.

After a while Ham began to move on. The rousing of his blood awakened the faculty of reason again. He had to move, he knew, or the thread of the whole fabric might unravel and whip away into space. He clutched frantically at that fraying thread. Without glancing into the jumbled tomb of snow, he began to circle the slide and struggle stubbornly, zigzagging a course up the face of the mountain.

VI

At first his mind refused to understand the significance of what his eyes saw. In the fury of his climb his memory and his thoughts were welded in an invincible confusion: there was no path in the maze. Then he saw the smoke like a veil across the snow. He looked into the issuing wind and attacked the final immense area above with redoubled energy, flogging himself to action, tearing at the ledges of granite and ice, flinging off his mittens in impatient frenzy to make his grip more effective, and finding too late that the moment his hands made contact with air they lost sensation and were as wood. He retraced his steps thirty feet where the mittens had lodged. He beat his hands until circulation was re-established and began the ascent again.

Immemorially he had been flinging himself against this granite face. The cold and the eternal upward struggle were a blind antagonist that he had fought forever. He attacked the broad cliff unaware of time or danger, inching up the barrier of infinite ice.

And then, with a suddenness that wrenched reason, he stumbled over the last ridge, and, half dead, plunged to his knees, his eyes staring up an incline to a V-shaped embrasure of rock. In the recess of this blind, debris-strewn alley, like a miracle past belief, lay the shining aluminum hulk of the lost plane. Out of a hole in the crumpled cabin, smoke drifted into the early morning air.

Ham staggered to his feet, shaking with a violence that made standing an unthinkable effort. He glanced back along his path and saw incalculably down, across miles of hardship, the valley as remote as another planet. He took a few steps. His legs buckled and threw him into the

snow. Then he began to crawl on all fours toward the plane.

Through his exhausted brain passed a swift procession of images; he could see Veritt the man in a thousand old attitudes; he began to call Veritt's name. He pawed the snow with desperation and imagined that he was winging toward the aluminum shell with splendid haste. But he only crept forward by inches, his eyes half shut and encrusted with ice.

In time he scrabbled himself by brute movement to the plane. His voice had failed, and, though he imagined himself to be uttering words of salvation, he managed only to croak hoarsely and snuffle against the frozen wall of metal. That, however, was enough; in a moment the door swung out with frail hesitancy, as if a vagrant wind had blown it open.

His eyes beheld a face in the aperture, and he mumbled through the fringe of frozen spittle stuck to his mouth. He spoke Veritt's name with a vast urbanity no shock could surprise. The face withdrew, and, as if in a dream, Ham found himself inside the smoke-filled compartment. He could take in only by degrees the unimaginable litter, the several bodies reclining in stricken postures about the cabin, some dead for days. He fought to pierce the shadows that oppressed his mind, and he looked for Jim Veritt.

He crawled near the stove made from a ripped oil tin and shut his eyes tiredly.

"You're too late," a voice cackled. Ham looked into the mad face he had seen at the door.

"Where is Captain Veritt?" Ham croaked.

The man did not answer, but slumped into a cocoon of blankets.

"Where is Jim Veritt?" Ham asked more firmly.

The eyes of the survivor opened. "Are you alone?" the sepulchral voice asked.

Ham said, "Is he dead?"

"They're all dead. You're too late."

Ham rubbed his frozen cheeks and they burned like fire. That was serious, he thought, but that thought was only a faint contrapuntal theme against the torrent of feeling that began to mount in him.

"You dirty bastard!" he said. "What have you done with him? Where is he? Damn you, tell me!"

The wretch turned bulging eyes on him. "Who?"

"Jim Veritt, you son of a bitch."

"I don't know him," the man said without interest.

Ham felt the rage within him mount like upheaving lava, and the heat seemed to burst out like flame through the pores of his beating face as he pawed his cheeks to quench the blaze. He had been betrayed by these scoundrels; there was no goal; and the world had dissolved behind him. He cursed the dying man, and the fire spread to his feet and hands until he could not bear it.

The voice from the blankets said weakly, "Veritt? That's funny! What did you come here for? You can't help us; you can't help yourself."

Ham looked dully at the man. He sat quietly, and his eyes grew dim and indifferent. Sun entered the smoky cabin, but its light made no impression on Ham's mind. Outside the bright, free wind blew cold, silent, with snow spume on Granite Peak.

PROTHALAMION

By ROBERT PRICE

TO LT. AND MRS. R. C. STONE

Stones know
THE BLOOD
Red, servicing,
Brims joyously.

The blood pumps rhapsodies
As global war engages,
This I know well,
Here under the shower trees
That bloom like bleeding sores.

I remember,
In early days under the box elder trees,
Bitter and awesome to the tongue,
We brewed poison from the pods
For fiends hooting by the fence wire.

—The snowballs in winter
Flung from the mother's heart and hand,
Unapplelike the snowballs flew—

In the East Bay hills,
Dust crusted on the legs
Beneath the blue gum trees;
I know this very well,
A Boy Scout honing blade
On carborundum stone.

—The hills that slip at rainy night
Slip soundlessly
Between the blue gum trees—

And the soft talk of chalk
Tracing on blackboard,
Soft talk for all
Beneath the shadows of
blue gum
shower
box elder.

1942
There are no swans along the river,
There are no mem'ries in a flivver,

But
AIRSHIPS
Bleak, unpromising,
Howling, silencing,

Nesting in our trees,
Parked, taxiing on rubber
On the runways of our hearts.

Our souls climb into it,
The highly specialized stomach
Of this white-starred flyingfish,
Inside with life-vest and parachute.

Twitching nervous as a filly
The gleaming oil and yellow ceramics
On the green runway,
Straining, itching for the flight.

Tongue-lapping needles
In the instruments
In the intestines
Of our dull-toned fighting fish,

Train our flight into the rayon sunset.
RPM's per moment tell us
Chalk talking, luminous,
Making entrance into day and night.

Late in the year
1942
I know too well
THE BLOOD
Red, servicing,
Brims joyously,
Yet nervously.

The trout cut down the middle
At the mother's table,
For all pink flesh and anatomic splendor,
Tells nothing.

Someday the stones will talk to me
Where they lay
Beneath the shadows of
blue gum
shower
box elder.

Cities of The Rockies: 3
Santa Fe

By ALFRED MORANG

THE STREETS of Santa Fe are the meeting places for three cultures; its history is charged with drama; its architecture is a solidified echo of the past. It is the crossroads of culture in the Southwest, and has become the capital city of New Mexico, a state of mind apart from the tides of American thought, and an art center. It exists as a symbol of the Spanish search for the cities of gold, and as the end of the Santa Fe Trail.

Dominated by the Catholic Church, and with a largely Spanish-American population, Santa Fe is more like a painting by El Greco than a canvas by one of the followers of the American Scene. The land around the city provides a setting which recalls certain sections of Spain. To the north, east and west are ranges of mountains, and towards the south the plains stretching away to more mountains, and areas where the earth glows red and yellow and purple in the hard-brilliant sunlight.

The surge of commercialism has to a great extent passed by Santa Fe. The people living the almost feudal life of the mountain villages beyond the city, and the local emotion-charged population, respond only slightly to the "go-getter" spirit. The early padres who established Santa Fe were more concerned with spreading the ideals of the Church than in commerce, and they have left an imprint which has resisted the attempts of modern-minded business people to change the traditions solidified by the centuries.

The very soil of Santa Fe is haunted by the past: workmen digging a sewer behind the Palace of the Governors unearthed Indian implements, human bones and pottery shards. In a valley a short distance from the city an old Spanish sword was found, and in many of the houses of the Spanish-Americans there are Santos and Bultos made long before English could be heard on the narrow, unpaved streets.

Within the social structure of Santa Fe there are many conflicting tides. Three races: Indian, Spanish-American and "Anglo" cannot live close to one another without occasional tension. But these tensions are gradually relaxing, and adjustments have taken place. Middle class

prejudices do exist, but they are in the minority, and the intolerance of the Bible Belt is largely confined to a few evangelical radio programs. And these expressions of a New England-born brand of religion leave no mark on the body of the city's culture. The spirit of St. Francis, the Patron Saint, seems to brood over everything with understanding and sympathy for the weaknesses and strengths of human beings.

Occasional attempts to modernize the city have been successful only when they have been concerned with utilities and cultural matters. The main artery, San Francisco Street, is a mixture of the Spanish tradition, the Old West, and a few modern buildings. But the few signs of modernity seem like gestures towards commercialism performed without reason in the midst of a ritual devoted to the forces of nature and to the irresistible power of tradition.

The city is built around a plaza, or square, that in the past was the scene of battles between Indians and Spaniards. During the yearly fiesta in celebration of the raising of an Indian siege by De Vargas, this plaza becomes the hub of interest for costumed crowds listening to orchestras from Old Mexico, to tipica orchestras, and watching native performers, dancers, acrobats.

From the plaza the streets stretch outwards in all directions. Northeastward, past the cathedral, lies the "dirt road section," where with a few exceptions the streets are unpaved, and the houses of artists and Spanish-Americans stand side by side. In this section are few signs of American life—the Spanish tradition has remained almost intact.

Other sections are a mixture. The few houses patterned after New England and midwestern models seem garishly out of place. On a few streets American middle-class consciousness asserts itself, but these indications of bourgeous ideals are like small patches of dirt on the surface of an old painting: unimportant, lost sight of in the composition of the whole.

The three cultures exist as separate entities. Indian, Spanish-American and Anglo, each moves within his own circle. The Indians sell their craftwork to the tourists, and provide color for the few artists still clinging to purely story-telling painting. But for the people who know them, they are symbols of their own communal culture, and of a highly organized religion which even the power of the Church has failed to change.

The Spanish-Americans occupy the most significant place in Santa Fe's life. Their ancestors opened the country to the white men. There are old families descended from the Conquistadores, and they maintain the old traditions and at the same time are fully aware of, and have adjusted themselves to the problems of today. These people are proud of their background—as proud as any blueblood from Boston's Beacon Hill.

The middle class of the Spanish-Americans make up the major part of the population. But their way of life is not the way of the usual American middle class. They are a section of the nation's life, but they maintain their own language and customs. They are intensely patriotic, as their service in the present war certainly demonstrates, but their collec-

tive lives are spent within the confines of their own culture. These Spanish-Americans do not represent a race being absorbed by another. Their devotion to religion and its pageantry is typically Spanish, and their music and crafts are entirely products of racial tradition.

Of all people, the Spanish-Americans know how to relax. Guitar notes creep through the nights, and Spanish voices mingle with mountain winds. In the cantinas, people from the mountain villages dance and drink beside people from the city. Many of these seekers of pleasure are very poor—they live on chili and pinto beans—but in spite of their poverty they know how to live, not simply exist. And in this respect they differ sharply from the poor in other sections of the country.

In the smoke-filled room of one cantina, a blind fiddler holds his violin like a 'cello, and behind the bowed notes a guitar player performs the strong rhythms of native music. Here there are people of many types: men from the ranches in the country, workmen who live in the city, maids from the houses of the wealthy Anglos, and girls who might have stepped from the paintings of Orozco. At tables the old people from the mountain villages watch the young dance the Varsoviana and the Raspa, and talk of the bailes of their youth. And when the night has become older and the vino has flowed, sometimes these year-tired ones join the dancing. Or some man with a face like the face of a Santo will sing, his voice rich with the memories of bitter mountain cold and the intense heat of summer. And upon the notes of the folk song it is easy to weave mind-pictures of crosses beside the roads far up in the Penitenti country where the Brothers of Light have paused to rest as they bury their dead.

Laughter comes easily to the Spanish-Americans. It is the gay laughter of people who know that it is better to dance than to sit and brood over sorrows that cannot be helped.

There is a theatre where Spanish language films are shown. The music played on the juke boxes is largely Mexican, and, in spite of the radio and the cinema, this type of music continued to hold the center of the stage.

On certain holy days the nights are stabbed by the light of many small fires built beside the roads. They mark the way to the Cathedral, the Church of Cristo Rey, or the Cross of the Martyrs. During these processions the present seems to vanish—time has become transparent and scenes from the hills of Spain have slipped over into America.

The Anglo population is varied. There are the ranchers from outside the city, in for a week end. They are typical of their kind, and could serve as characters in a western story that is written on fact instead of formula. And there are the business people, many of them old residents whose ancestors established themselves in Santa Fe when New Mexico was a territory. But business in Santa Fe cannot be conducted according to methods that govern commerce in other sections of the country. These men understand the Spanish-Americans, the Indians, and the various types of Anglo that make up the population. Each race has to be approached differently; selling becomes a matter of a far deeper psychological under-

standing than is needed in dealing with the usual American public.

The artists are a definite part of the community's life. Art is taken seriously, it is not an embellishment for the homes of the few. There are painters who cling to purely naturalistic art, and they depend on the tourist trade and the none-too-good taste of the oil-rich. But these painters are in the minority; most of the artists working in Santa Fe are progressive or modern in tendency. Every tendency in contemporary art is represented, and the work usually has a high technical and creative standard. The Art Museum, a section of the State Museum, which also has buildings housing archaeological and ethnological exhibits, is the only "open-door" museum in the country, and the result of this policy is the unearthing of many new talents over a period of years.

Santa Fe has become a stopping place for many types of Anglo: writers, painters, journalists, scientists, people from every walk of life who suffer from tuberculosis. In the lobby of La Fonda and in the cantina moves a cross-section of humanity: a surrealist painter, a foreign correspondent, an aviator, a society woman escaping from a boring husband. La Fonda is built on the site of the old hostelry that marked the end of the Santa Fe Trail, and with the De Vargas Hotel, a center of political activity, is the center of Anglo life.

Of course, Santa Fe is afflicted with the backwash of the art world, the misfits, the maladjusted, and the professional bohemians. These types hang to the edge of the real creative life, waste their time and drink themselves into oblivion. But the serious people leave these sad fragments of humanity alone to go their own ways towards their own ultimate destruction.

Owing to the mixed population, Santa Fe is not afflicted with the hangover of Calvinistic conventions. The people live their own lives. Unhindered, a person may drink himself to death or paint an exhibition and have a chance of finding someone capable of understanding his efforts and even of buying them.

As it is the capital city of New Mexico, politics play a large part in the life of Santa Fe. The Spanish-Americans take their politics seriously. To them, who will be elected becomes a matter upon which the future hangs; but once an election is over the tension subsides and life moves on, punctuated by guitar notes, surrounded by the good and bad effects of tradition.

Old Spanish-American women wearing black shawls; people strolling through the plaza while a band plays on Sunday evenings; the sound of cathedral bells; the wind smelling of pinon—these are the timeless symbols of Santa Fe. It is Old Spain in America, and it contains the strengths and weaknesses inherent in Spanish culture. And on the edge of the city's life is the Indian with his inscrutable face, his sheer logic; and living in adobe houses are the Anglos that have come here to carry on small businesses, to find a congenial environment for creative work, to regain their health—and, in certain regrettable instances, to waste their lives.

BOOKS

The Conversion of Joseph Wood Krutch

By AUSTIN WARREN

KRUTCH'S *Johnson** addresses a kind of reader much more frequent in England than in these States—the cultivated middlebrow of unspecialized interests and ample leisure. It offers such a reader a *Life and Works* of Dr. Johnson which quietly resumes the expert 20th century researches of Johnson and Boswell scholars and undogmatically revaluates what the 19th century was inclined to dismiss as negligible—Johnson's writings.

The American middlebrow of middle age may be supposed to remember the grotesque picture of Johnson assembled (out of Boswell) by Macaulay and still to labor under the impression that Johnson ('a great talker but a dull writer') was, to all memorable intents, created by Boswell. Meanwhile, scholarship has effectively disengaged Johnson from Boswell and (in the fine studies by Tinker and Geoffrey Scott) Boswell from Johnson. Meanwhile, Eliot has praised *The Vanity of Human Wishes* and the essays on poetry. Meanwhile, criticism has disengaged Johnson from his tea, his scorched wig, his cat Hodge, and his "Sir." The "new" Johnson has much continuity with the Pre-Restoration 17th century of Sir Thomas Browne (whose life Johnson wrote) and Burton, whose *Anatomy of Melancholy* was a favorite book. In his own century, his closest brothers in the spirit are the great Christian pessimists Law and Butler. His political thinking is not what we Americans call conservative (i. e., finance-capitalistic, "Republican"), but radically and Christianly conservative, like the Distributism of Belloc and Chesterton. The best modern readings of Johnson are offered by Christopher Hollis (*Dr. Johnson,* 1929, especially Chap. I), by W. B. C. Watkins (*Perilous Balance,* 1939), and by Bertrand Bronson ("Johnson Agonistes," 1944).

Krutch's general, sound intention is to dispel the middlebrow's recollected caricature and to supply in its place the modern portrait. But something has happened to damage or dampen. Either Krutch lingered too long over his book, so that his "enthusiasm" cooled to "judicious" concern for accuracy and proportion, or he thought too much about his readers and "communication," too little about truth and his own psyche. The result is a book with no sharp direction of focus, no spiriting polemic,—a book of which one's praise is that it is everywhere carefully written (like the novels of Howells), that it is quietly sensible and reasonable, equable and sustained.—One respects Krutch's unobtrusive scholarship, his unfalter-

*Joseph Wood Krutch: *Samuel Johnson.* N. Y.: Henry Holt, 1944. 600 pp.

ing tact and taste; but (as Johnson said of *Paradise Lost*) one can put the book respectfully down and forget to take it up again. As for Johnson, Krutch destroys the Macaulayan caricature, but (by his even-paced competency, his lack of thesis or special zeal), ends in making Johnson seem sober, sensible, and rather commonplace.

The relation of this book to Krutch's earlier *Conscience and Comedy After the Restoration, Poe: A Study in Genius,* and *The Modern Temper* is puzzling and disturbing. *The Modern Temper* was an expressive statement of the 20th century spiritual blues, the wasteland and the lost generation. It was a personal as well as a representative, a generational, confession. Now comes the *Johnson,* with its tone of ripe, mellow "humanistic" adjustment and acceptance. What has effected the conversion? With the skepticism masked as modesty which appears among academics, even half-academics, like Krutch, this silence may be prompted by the feeling: No one is interested in me, the critic, and my position and the reasons for it. My readers are interested in Restoration comedy, Poe, or Johnson. That feeling, not new, is damaging to the intellectual integrity of a critic, who, whatever his current subject, is first and last a sensibility, a conscience, an intelligence engaged in discovering its own real principles of judgment.

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FISHERIAN ANTHROPOLOGY

by JACK CONROY

VARDIS FISHER'S early novels—notably **Dark Bridwell** and **In Tragic Life** — were characterized by their raw naturalism on a physical plane. Fisher's treatment of sex made most of his allegedly hard-boiled contemporaries seem like whimsical romanticists. As the Vridar Hunter tetralogy progressed beyond **In Tragic Life** it became more and more intellectualized — the torments more of the spirit than of the body. Faunish **April** and **Forgive Us Our Virtues** traveled farther afield from primitive brutality, while **Children of God** and **City of Illusion** were considered pretty thin gruel by admirers who remembered the painful gropings of the boy Vridar in the Antelope Hills.

Darkness and the Deep signified a return (conceptually, at least) to the blood-and-guts realism of **In Tragic Life,** rejected by almost every eastern publisher before Jim Gipson accepted it for Caxton Printers. Again there is soul-retching fare here for those of ultra-delicate sensibilities. Fisher's fictionalized anthropology is not "popular" anthropology, indeed, and its general effect on squeamish weaklings must be similar to that produced in the austere bosom of a Back Bay member of the D. A. R. when she learned that one of her revered ancestors was hanged at Valley Forge for horse stealing.

The Golden Rooms, (Vanguard. 1944) a continuaton of **Darkness and the Deep,** begins as the miasmic darkness of our primordial night has lifted a bit. Man has invented the stone axe as a weapon, and Harg, most nimble-witted of his tribe, painfully acquires the mastery of fire that makes of him acknowledged leader of his people. Within the warmth of flame-lit golden rooms hollowed out of the darkness, Harg's followers feel more security than they ever have known before. But it is still a precarious beast-harried existence with extremes of starvation varied

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by frantic gluttony when the windfall of a large animal comes their way, usually by some fortuitous accident rather than by their own skill or daring. Birds' eggs, rank with decaying embryos or further decompositon leaving only a residue of "foul juices," are esteemed **hors d'ouevres.**

But Harg's tribe was destined to meet a more terrible enemy than the forces of nature. The Cro-Magnons came with their bows and arrows and there was the beginning of war between groups rather than individuals. The Cro-Magnons easily vanquished the dull and physically inferior people of Harg, but Gode, leader of the victors has his sense of triumph tempered by the first stirrings of conscience or remorse. The ghosts of the slain haunt him; he does incomprehensible things like partially taming a wolf cub, hitherto considered a natural foe of man. The wolf escapes, and Gode yearns after him vaguely.

Fisher's novels about our ancestors represent an ambitious project and the first two volumes are as impressive as anything he has written to date. Whatever professional anthropologists may think of his interpretations, most readers who relished his first writing will be likely to welcome a return to the sort of material he is eminently qualified to handle.

TWO WESTERN BOOKS

by DALE C. MORGAN

TWO new books on Caxton's Western Americana list are published with an appropriate simultaneity. **Pardner of the Wind,** as told by N. Howard (Jack) Thorp to Neil McCullough Clark, is an informative, stimulating, and frequently downright amusing account of life on the Southwestern range. Walker D. Wyman's **The Wild Horse of the West** is a useful inquiry into the origins and evolution of the horseflesh that was the foundation of that range life.

Mr. Wyman's narrative is a straightforward organization of the facts concerning a somewhat neglected area of Western history. Though the writing is unimaginative and characterized by mannerisms which do not make for complete clarity, Mr. Wyman's readers will come to him for information rather than for entertainment, and they will be pleased to find a great deal of solid fact, the fruit of patient

research, in his book. Something like a third of his space is devoted to the introduction of the horse into America after Columbus, its spread north and south in the two Americas, the technological revolution effected in the life of the Plains Indians by the acquisition of the horse, the development of the so-called true wild horse or mustang. and what became of it after the livestock industry began to occupy the range. These opening chapters are the most interesting in the book, but Mr. Wyman's emphasis is laid on what has happened to the wild horse since 1890. In his reporting of the case, the "wild" horse or Indian mustang has completely disappeared, and the feral horse one hears about in these days customarily is a stray from a ranch herd, or a recent descendant of such estrays.

I have no space to discuss minor misstatements and misinterpretations, but the inadequacy of Mr. Wyman's chapters on the Indian and the horse cannot be passed by. There is, in particular, only the most superficial discussion of the horse in Indian mores, and in this connection one is amazed to find that the Crows, perhaps the most adroit horsethieves who ever lived, figure in the book only as victims of a 70-horse theft by the Oglalas and as dashing horsemen in an episode erroneously said to have involved Washington Irving.

If one takes up the Thorp-Clark volume immediately on laying down the Wyman study, one may fairly feel that Caxton's managing editor should have got his authors fogether on the subject of horse-flesh, for we find the former setting forth as unquestioned fact matters that the latter has just got through energetically denying. But **Pardner of the Wind** cannot be discussed in such narrow limits; it ranges over such wide areas of Western life that almost anyone with specific Western interests will find ores to pay off a little digging. "Jack" Thorp, who died in 1940, "had the living" of his book. As a "writin' cowboy" who made a hobby of gathering fugitive cowboy songs, Thorp was an exception among his fellows; in words he once put in a puncher's mouth as to why some sure-enough cowhand didn't write the truth about range life: "If we fellers that were raised in a saddle would a' wrote those books we wouldn't a' been raised in the saddle, and those fellows who do write those books haven't been raised in the saddle, and that's the reason they can

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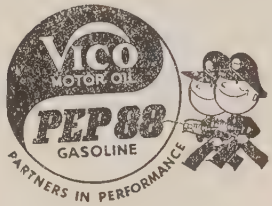

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write 'em." But if in his literary inclinanations Thorp was an exception, in the manner of his life he was wholly typical, and the account of it is well deserving a place on that very small shelf of honest books about Western range life.

Mr. Clark's work as collaborator is skillful, and it seems evident that most of the last half of the book, typical chapters concerning such matters as the facts about Billy the Kid, cowboy humor, life with the rail herd, and "chuck and gear" are his own work, though with important contributions from the salty old cowboy. The book is consistently good reading, and not least among its excellences is the quality of its folklore. When, merely in parenthesis, you can find a definition of the **Llano Estacado** as being "so flat that you can see the water in the bottom of a forty-foot well ten miles away," you can feel assured that most people are likely to have themselves a very good time with the book.

FARRELL AS CRITIC

by Jarvis Thurston

JAMES T. Farrell's new book (**The League of Frightened Philistines,** Vanguard) is a selection from his critical writings of the last fifteen years. With one exception, these essays have been previously printed in such magazines as **The Saturday Review of Literature, The New Republic, Partisan Review, The Atlantic Monthly, The Southern Review,** and **The New York Times.**

The title piece is a spirited attack on MacLeish, J. Donald Adams, Van Wyck Brooks, and Lewis Mumford as representatives of a coterie whose post-Pearl Harbor writings have cried for a literature of faith and affirmation and damned such writers as Faulkner, Dos Passos, Hemingway, and Dreiser as defeatists whose novels so demoralized the United States that it was almost incapable of defending itiself against foreign aggressions. To MacLeish and his confreres Farrell says: "Come out in the open and on the real plane of social morals, wearing your proper uniforms — those of ideological policemen, with a literary star on your blue coats. Neither you nor the power that stands behind you frightens us. Gentlemen, it is clear — you are the league of frightened Philistines. Frightened Philistines can never be masters of the future."

In two of the other essays, "Literature and Ideology" and "The Faith of Lewis Mumford," Farrell continues his attack on those who aim "to compel the writer to abort his work in the name of formal political ends and to impose critical and political legislation on him." The writer must be free, says Farrell, to present "the environments, the patterns of destiny, the joys and sorrows, the tribulations, the dreams, the fantasies, the aspirations, the cruelties, the shames, the dreams, of men and women."

Also included are Farrell's **N. Y. Times** revaluations of Dreiser, Hemingway, Twain, Lardner, Dostoievsky, and Joyce — pieces too short to say very much, but which, nevertheless reveal Farrell as a sensitive and perceptive reader of fiction quite unlike his own.

Two of the essays concern the short story. "Nonsense and the Short Story" discusses the inanities of such diagramatically-minded teacher-critics as Brander Matthews, Stewart Beach, E. A. Cross, Clayton Hamilton, and Blanche Colton Williams. "The Short Story," a paper read at the First American Writers Congress, analyzes a few stories to demonstrate to the Marxist brethren that a good story emphasizes "'feeling, emotion and atmosphere rather than ideology, and is the kind of story that revolutionary critics should encourage."

By far the most interesting pieces in the books are "The Language of Hollywood" and "More on Hollywood," in which Farrell explores the reasons for the vitiating emptiness of most American films. That I find these two pieces more interesting than his revaluations or essays on purely literary subjects brings me to what I think is a central statement to make about this book. For whom are most of these essays published in book form? Certainly not for the literary, for although Farrell's attitudes and evaluations seem generally sound, he has little to say about books and their writers that most of us haven't read in much more detail; that isn't true when he is writing of Mr. Zanuck and Hollywood big business, for here is a world not quite so familiar.

* * *

COMING in the Winter number: Short stories by Franz Kafka, George Abbe, Olive Ghiselin. Essays by Eric Russell Bentley, Charles Neider, and Harry S. Campbell.

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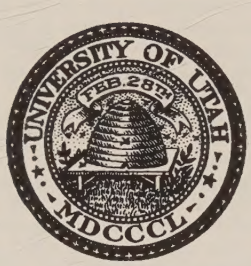

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RILKE'S LETTERS

by M. L. NIELSEN

THE publication of the early letters of Rainer Maria Rilke (**Letters of Rainer Maria Rilke, 1892-1910,** translated by Jane Bannard Greene and M. D. Harter Norton, W. W. Norton, 1945) is to be followed by a second carrying the poet's correspondence down to 1926, the year of his death. These two volumes, together with **Wartime Letters of Rainer Maria Rilke,** will bring to American readers the most important part of the extensive Rilke correspondence edited in Germany by his daughter and son-in-daw, Ruth Sieber-Rilke and Carl Sieber, and published by Insel-Verlag.

A great part of Rilke's energy went into his letters, particularly those addressed to his wife, the sculptress Clara Westhoff, and to his life-long friend, Lou Andreas-Salome. The result is that many of these letters have an artistic validity of their own and are filled with a beauty and sensitivity and depth of feeling which makes of them something very near to poetry. But in a larger sense they represent a sort of spiritual autobiography which is invaluable as a means of enriching one's interpretation of Rilke's poetry. Whatever drama there was in Rilke's life was inner drama, and his letters reflect the emotional and spiritual struggles he underwent in striving for artistic expression. Time and again in his letters we read of some inner struggle which, when resolved, led to a new burst of creative energy.

The period covered by this collection reflects all the important experiences of Rilke's early life: his difficult emergence from an unhappy childhood and youth; the experience of Russia which so completely colored his formative years; the contact with the artists' colony at Worpswede, where he learned to practice **sehen** and to sharpen his awareness for all the things of nature; the influence of Paris and Rodin, and the revelation of the art of Cezanne. The major works which came from these years are the **Stories of God, the Book of Hours, New Poems, Requiems,** and the **Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge.** The year 1910, with which the letters of this volume end, saw the end of a period of creative activity and the beginning of a restless and comparatively unproductive period which was not to be broken until 1922, the year of the **Duino Elegies** and the **Sonnets to Orpheus.**

The volume is provided with excellent notes which supply valuable biographical information and connect many of the ideas and experiences in the letters with the poems which grew out of them.

* * *

COMMENT (Continued)

One of the disappointments of this issue was the realization, finally, that the heavier paper stock and new type face which we had ordered and expected to adopt would not be forthcoming until much later. Now we can only hope that the problems of reconversion which caused the delay may be overcome by the time we are ready to print the Winter number.

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Most contributors to this issue are well known to our readers. Bernard DeVoto, who is a native of Ogden, Utah is appearing for the first time, as is Witter Bynner, who, as everyone knows, comes from New Mexico. Others who have never appeared before in RMR are Austin Warren, professor of English at the University of Iowa; Jack Conroy, novelist and book-reviewer, of Chicago; Charlie Masters of New Mexico; and Kenneth O. Hansen of Idaho.

Significantly, all contributors with the exception of Mr. Warren and Mr. Conroy are from the Rocky Mountains. Vardis Fisher is a native of Idaho and lives at Hagerman; Wallace Stegner, who was reared in Montana and Utah, is now a member of the English staff at Stanford University; Alan Swallow is a native of Wyoming; Ellis Foote, Dale Morgan, Jarvis Thurston, and Robert Price are all from Utah; George Snell was born in Idaho and raised in Utah (he is now a member of the staff of NBC in San Francsco.); Brewster Ghiselin teaches creative writing at the University of Utah; Ray B. West Jr. is associate professor of English at Utah State. M. L. Nielsen, who joins the staff as associate editor with this issue, teaches modern languages at Utah State College.

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